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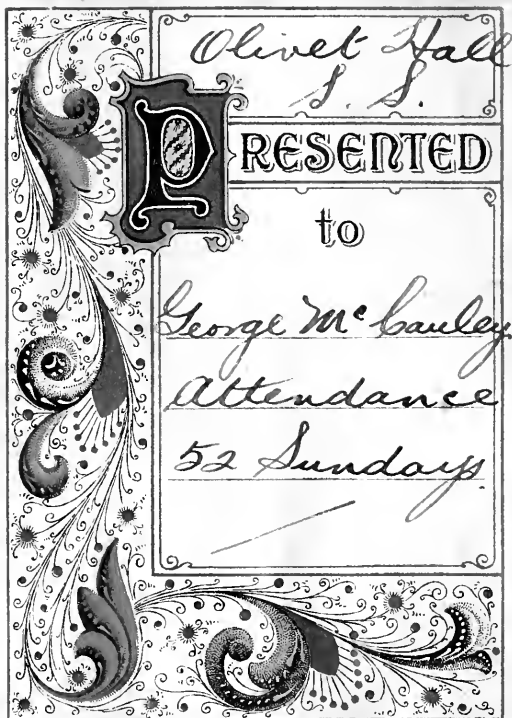
RIVER AGENTS
IN DARK TIMES

THE WALDENSES
AND THEIR PERSECUTIONS
IN THE VALLEYS
OF PIEDMONT.

16

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BRIGHT LIGHTS IN DARK TIMES



"The miserable inhabitants fled in haste to the mountains."

See page 56.

BRIGHT LIGHTS IN DARK TIMES;

OR,

THE WALDENSES,

AND

Their Persecutions in the Valleys of Piedmont.



16

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NOTE

THE following chapters (originally contributed to the pages of a young peoples' magazine) assume to being little more than a *resumé* of what is narrated at greater length and fuller detail in the larger histories. The author's aim has not been to write a history, but rather to give prominence to some of the great crises in Waldensian story: especially those which prove so convincingly how impotent is the opposition and anger of men—even where seemingly all powerful—against the feeblest witnesses for Christ, when His strong arm is round about them; and further, how impossible it is to quench a light that God **has** kindled, or stamp out a testimony evidently marked with divine approval.

Introduction.

EVERY student, whether of Biblical or of Church history, must have been struck with this remarkable fact, that God has never, at any period of His dealings with man, left Himself without at least an adequate witness on this earth. Abel, Enoch, Noah, and the patriarchs and prophets were all so many links in one great golden chain of testimony which we see stretching right across the world's history, from the creation to the birth of Christ. Just as truly existing, though not perhaps always so easily traced, is the *silver thread* of witnesses for Christ, from the days of the apostles, even unto the present time. Feeble indeed was the glimmer of heavenly light that shone out during the long period of the Middle Ages; but the light *was* there though it *did* seem at times to have expired. A divine

hand kept it burning until such time as it pleased Him to let it burst forth again in night-dispelling radiance, flooding great part of the world with its soul-reviving beams.

There can be but little doubt that the Waldenses were in a very remarkable way preserved to bear testimony to the simple truths of the Gospel during the very darkest period of these ages. Their origin dates so far back as to be almost lost in obscurity. Whether, as some writers allege, they originally seceded from the Church of Rome, or, as others affirm, they were never at any period associated with it need not be discussed here. Certain it is that when first the Vaudois appear prominently in history, it is as antagonistic to that great world-system. Enduring opposition and persecution unparalleled in the history of the Church, they nevertheless clung with unflinching tenacity to the truths which they maintained their fathers had handed down even from primitive times. Secluded within their valleys of Piedmont, they remained a standing witness against the heresies, and flagrant evils of Rome. Nor did they hesitate to expose and con-

demn by every means in their power, those evils ; and Rome rightly judged that she had no more formidable opponents against her worldly power, and spiritual pride, than the poor herdsmen of the Alps. The lamp of divine truth shining there, only too surely revealed the dense darkness in which the Papacy had become enshrouded, and consequently no effort was left untried to crush and stamp out this testimony in the mountains. But the light of God's truth could not be thus extinguished—brighter and brighter it shone until the glorious day-dawn of the Reformation. How much indeed are we indebted, even at the present day, to the undaunted fidelity of these humble witnesses for Christ and His truth !

How far the Waldenses were justified in appealing to the sword, even in defence of life and liberty, is a point hard to determine. It is easier to condemn than to enter adequately into the terrible provocations to which they were subjected. The Vaudois too, were naturally highly courageous and patriotic, and doubtless this trait impelled them to resist with vigour the


cruel and cowardly attacks of their enemies. Still that inexorable law, "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword," remains true, and the Vaudois fully experienced it. It is not improbable, however, that God overruled this lack of patience and confidence in His power, for in some of the terrible reverses inflicted by the Waldenses on their enemies, we can plainly see that they were undoubtedly used as instruments in accomplishing God's righteous judgments.



The Waldenses.

CHAPTER I.

ORIGIN AND EARLY HISTORY.

HE origin of the Waldenses, like all distant objects, remains in some obscurity. Various opinions have been advanced by their historians, some contending for, and others against, a great antiquity. The former endeavour to prove that a separate church has existed in the Alpine valleys from the earliest ages of Christianity, while the latter will not admit an earlier origin than the eleventh or twelfth century.

History and tradition alike, however, support the opinion that an almost uninterrupted testimony has been maintained, and handed down from primitive times. "With the dawn of history," observes an English historian, "we discover some simple Christians in the valleys of the Alps, where they still exist under the ancient name of the Vaudois, who by the light of the New Testament, saw the extraordinary contrast between the purity of primitive times.

and the vices of the gorgeous hierarchy which surrounded them." As throwing some light on their early conversion to Christianity, another writer says : "Traces still exist of the Roman road which crossed the Cottian Alps, and extended from Milan to Boulogne, being the usual thoroughfare through which the Roman legions travelled from Italy to Gaul and Britain. While noticing their progress, in reading history, let it be remembered that the same road was probably the means of conveying many who brought glad tidings, and published the gospel of peace to the dwellers in the mountains and elsewhere.

"The famous city of Lyons, in the South of France, contained a community of Christians, as early as the second or third century ; their bishop was Ireneaus, the pupil of Polycarp, himself the pastor of the church at Smyrna, and the disciple of St. John. It is not improbable that he was the instrument of converting the simple mountaineers from Paganism. Tradition also speaks of St. Paul as having travelled in this direction towards Spain, preaching to the inhabitants."

The Vaudois themselves have always maintained that the religion they followed had been preserved from father to son, and from generation to generation, "from all time and from time immemorial." Their own historians,

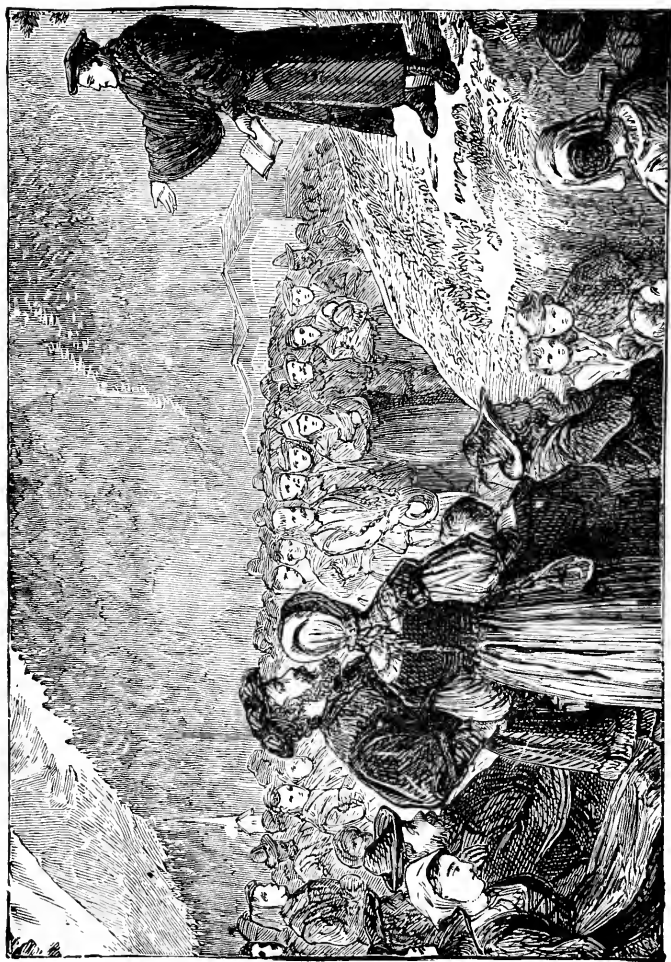
too, are of the same opinion. "The Vaudois of the Alps," writes one of the latest, "are according to our belief the primitive church preserved in these valleys."

Thus we have abundant testimony in favour of a very early origin: let us now look for a moment at what is stated by those who hold a contrary opinion. These are, for the most part, Romish writers who appear anxious to prove that the Waldenses were merely a sect, which sprang up about the close of the twelfth century, Peter Waldo—the merchant Reformer of Lyons, as he was called—being their founder. There appears but little more reason for connecting Peter Waldo with the origin of the Waldenses than the similarity of names, which, however, is no more than a coincidence. "The appellation," says Dr. Gilly in his 'Waldensian Researches' "of Valdesi in Italian, Vaudois in French, and Waldensian in English church history, means neither more nor less than 'men of the valleys.'"

We may easily understand why the Roman Church should attempt to cast doubt on the antiquity of the Waldensian Church. To admit it was to acknowledge that a distinct church, separate from "the one, only, apostolic church" (as she proudly boasted), had existed and flourished from all time, thus yielding what she most of all desired, complete and universal

supremacy. Perhaps the opinion of the later origin of the Waldenses, may have gained ground with other writers, from the fact that little mention is made of them in history until the time of Peter Waldo, about the year 1180.

It is as far back, however, as the eighth century, that the earliest authentic records are placed. The history of the Church of the valleys connects itself, at this period with Claude, the Bishop of Turin. What glimpses history gives us of the life and labours of this early witness all reveal him as a most excellent man, and a great and worthy witness for Christ—a bright light indeed, shining in dark times. Like Luther, centuries afterwards, he went to the pure Word of God, and learning first himself the precious truths which he found therein, he gave them again to his flock with mighty earnestness and power. “I teach no new doctrine,” he replied to those who called the truths of the Bible, heresy, “but I keep myself to the pure truth; and I will persist in opposing to the uttermost all superstition.” When he was appointed Bishop of Turin, his first object was to destroy the images, which had gained a recent entrance into the churches, and he afterwards abolished every ceremony which he considered not in accordance with the Word of God. “How delightful,”



PREACHING IN THE VALLEYS.

exclaims his biographer, " must it have been to the little flock on the mountains to range themselves under the protecting crook of this faithful shepherd ! "

We shall not stay to dwell on the several links which connect the faithful Claude with Peter Waldo. There were not wanting witnesses, all through the centuries that separate them, both to testify for the truth, and to protest against the evil that was now growing on apace.

Although he was clearly not their founder, there can be no doubt that the Waldenses owed a deep debt of gratitude to Waldo. He it was who gave them the Scriptures in their own tongue. Before his version appeared the Bible was written only in the Latin tongue, a dead language at that period, unknown to the common people, and those not connected with the church. With what joy then must the Word of God have been welcomed by the nations ! Now each could read " in the tongue wherein he was born " the wonderful works of God. This translation of the Scriptures is known as the Romaunt version ; a tongue spoken by all the Southern nations of Europe during the middle ages. There are six copies of this version still in existence, preserved in the principal libraries of Europe.

The story of Peter Waldo, of his conversion

and subsequent life of devotedness is full of interest. Although called the "poor man of Lyons," this had not been always true of Peter. There was a time when he held his head high amongst the great ones of his own city. He was then a rich Lyonese merchant. But one day as he sat at a sumptuous feast, clothed in purple and fine linen, the wine cup going freely round, and a companion of his pleasures by his side, the cold hand of death was placed suddenly upon his friend, and the merchant saw him stricken lifeless at his feet. This produced serious thought, and aroused him from the life of pleasure in which he had till that moment indulged. Conviction of a future punishment for sin seized him: he cried for mercy: and receiving therewith peace and pardon, made, like Luther, an unalterable determination to give himself up entirely to the service of God.

Then we find him selling his house and lands, that he might be able to relieve the wants of the poor, and help to spread the glad tidings of a free salvation. Studying the Bible with great zeal, and quenching his own soul-thirst at the pure fountain of the Word of God, he determined that the people should have access to the same living spring. Accordingly he translated, or had translated, into the common tongue the whole of the New Testament, besides other

portions of Scripture. This was an unspeakable boon, as well to those who sought to spread the truth as to those who received it. "Thus provided with the Scriptures in their own tongue," a recent writer observes, "they were able to explain to the people, that they were not advancing doctrines of their own, but a pure faith as it existed in the Bible."

The appearance of Peter Waldo's version of the Scriptures is a landmark in our history. With the keen penetrating glance of the eagle whose home is among the snowy summits of the Alps, the great enemy of the Waldenses, the Papal power, detected the quarter whence trouble was likely to arise. So long as the efforts of Waldo and his followers were confined to their own individual labours they were not much molested; but when Waldo presented the Scriptures to the people in a tongue which they could read and understand, and copies were rapidly being multiplied and circulated far and wide, the anger of the enemy became fully aroused, and efforts were at once made to extinguish the light which was now burning so brightly. As the immediate cause of this great movement, poor Peter was the first to suffer persecution. He was straightway denounced as the worst of heretics. His life being in jeopardy, he concealed himself for some time in his native city; but at length

being discovered, he escaped to Piedmont, where he was gladly received by his brethren of the valleys. Here, however, he was not long permitted to rest in peace: once more the pursuers are on his track, and again he is compelled to fly—this time to Bohemia. For many years in this new field of labour, with unabated zeal and devotion, he continued to spread the light of the glorious Gospel, “giving light to them that sat in darkness.” Then he was called away to his well-earned rest, to receive the reward which the Master was surely waiting to bestow upon him.

Meanwhile, the followers of Waldo had been persecuted and scattered abroad. But as seed dispersed and driven by the storm is lodged thereby in other soil, so did this tempest of persecution only scatter the divine seed that it might fall into fresh ground, spring up, and bring forth a goodly harvest after many days.



CHAPTER II.

THE WALDENSIAN VALLEYS.

WE are now arrived at the beginning of the thirteenth century. It is a dark moment in our story. Faithful Peter Waldo is no more: persecuted, and hunted like a partridge on the mountains, we have seen him die an exile in a foreign land; and his followers, in like manner, scattered hither and thither as chaff before the wind. Has the enemy of the truth then triumphed? Is the movement which began so full of promise thus to end? Must the light that has already partially illumined the darkness be extinguished? These are the questions that arise if we look only at the sad effects of this persecution. But in this conflict of light with darkness, of truth against error and superstition, we may rest assured that the cause of truth, which is the cause of the living God, will prevail.

It is well to remember, however, God's ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts. If the enemy had for the moment triumphed, it was only that his fall might be the greater, his final overthrow the more complete ; and if God's suffering people were left awhile in doubt as to His designs, it was but to test their confidence in His faithfulness and word. Thus was it with God's ancient people Israel when, on that memorable night, they were encamped upon the shores of the Red Sea. The sound of the Egyptains' chariots thundered in their rear ; the angry waves rolled wrathfully at their feet ; lofty mountains enclosed them on either side. Destruction seemed imminent. Then at the supreme moment did Jehovah, with an outstretched arm, and with mighty signs and wonders, work a complete deliverance for His people. And He who thus stood by Israel in their hour of peril, was now watching over His suffering Church, in due time to prove that He was still their shield and exceeding great reward.

Meanwhile, the Word of God—that precious legacy Waldo had left to the people—was doing its own blessed work. If the awakening voice of the preacher was no longer heard, this silent messenger was gaining an entrance into every land ; and, what was still better, into many poor dark hearts, telling them of a Saviour's

love, and of peace and pardon without money and without price. Translated into their own tongue, the Bible came like another revelation from God; so dark and ignorant were the nations of Europe at this time. Carried from country to country by missionaries, merchants, and troubadours (especially the latter, who at this early period roamed over every country of Europe) the Bible was at once the main instrument used of God to hasten on the great Reformation, which in due time was to be accomplished.

By none was it so gladly welcomed as by the Waldenses. It came as a fresh token of the continued faithfulness of God to His people; and with delight they hailed its advent as the sure harbinger of that day-dawn which was now so soon to break on the long dark night of Christendom. Diligently they multiplied copies: and not narrowing its sphere to their own valleys, sent forth missionaries to every country beyond. Thus the Word went everywhere, and was blessed.

But the evil eye of Rome, which had discovered and dealt with the source, was not slow to detect the channel by which this stream of divine blessing was flowing. The diligent circulation of the Scriptures by the Waldenses now awoke the thunders of the Vatican against them.

Secluded within their valleys, and surrounded on every side by lofty mountains, the Waldenses had hitherto escaped many persecutions, which, but for this isolated and inaccessible position, must have been their portion. It would almost seem as if God had raised those mighty hills expressly as a barrier of defence, behind which his poor suffering people could retire and find shelter from the angry storm of persecution which often raged beyond. But now it pleased God that they should suffer for His sake. From this time onward the tide of persecution continued to rise yet higher and higher, until not even the rampart of mountains, by which they were surrounded, was able to defend them from its force. The history of the Vaudois from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century is, alas ! but one long story of continued suffering and woe, bloodshed and misery, only terminating in the expulsion of the people from their valleys.

But before we darken our page with these sad records, let us turn aside and visit the valleys ; dwelling on some of the places of interest, and seeing something of Waldensian life and labour in this secluded retreat. Glancing over the map of Europe we shall find on the Italian side of the Cottian Alps, and amongst its lower ranges, the



WALDENSIAN MISSIONARY AND TROUBADOUR.

dwelling place of the "men of the valleys." We cannot here describe the mingled grandeur and beauty of its scenery; its lofty mountains whose summits are crowned with eternal snows; its great chestnut forests; its rich pasturages; its lovely verdant valleys; its quiet shady brooks; and, what is so remarkable, the natural fortress-like position of the valleys one to the other, rendering them completely impregnable against assault, and affording every facility for defence. Well might their historian, Legér, exclaim with native ardour, "The Eternal, our God, who has destined it as the theatre of His wonders, and the asylum of His ark, has astonishingly and naturally fortified it." As revealing how intensely the Vaudois appreciated the loving care of God in thus surrounding them with this natural bulwark of defence, we may cite a verse or two of a beautiful poem by Mrs. Hemans, called, "Hymn of the Vaudois Mountaineers" :—

 " For the strength of the hills we bless Thee,
 Our God, our father's God !
 Thou hast made thy children mighty
 By the touch of the mountain sod.
 Thou hast fixed our ark of refuge
 Where the spoiler's foot ne'er trod ;
For the strength of the hills we bless Thee
 Our God, our father's God !
 We are watchers of a beacon
 Whose light must never die ;
 We are guardians of an altar
 'Midst the silence of the sky ;

The rocks yield founts of courage
Struck forth as by Thy rod ;
For the strength of the hills we bless Thee,
Our God, our father's God !
The banner of the chieftain
Far, far below us waves,
The war-horse of the spearman
Cannot reach our lofty caves ;
Thy dark clouds wrap the threshold
Of freedom's last abode ;
For the strength of the hills we bless Thee,
Our God, our father's God !"

But a deeper interest is attached to this region than can be derived either from its great natural strength or the surpassing beauty of its scenery. Once within the valleys, there is not a spot that does not awaken sad memories of the past, "not a rock that is not a monument, not a meadow that has not seen an execution, not a village that does not register its martyrs.* Even at the entrance to the valleys, we are reminded by the Castelluzzo, a huge monolith which rises nearly to the clouds, of the evil days of persecution, happily now of the past, when from the summit of this mound the confessor was hurled sheer down its awful steep, and dashed on the rocks at its foot. Here lay, in one ghastly heap, the mangled remains of pastor and peasant, mother and child ! It was the tragedies connected with this mountain, mainly, that called forth the noble sonnet of Milton :—

* Muston. A native historian.

"Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints whose bones
Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold.
. . . In Thy book record their groans
Who were Thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piedmontese, that rolled
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moans
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven."

Yet there are spots in the valleys, with associations of a far different and happier nature. One of the most interesting is in the Pra-del Tor, situated in the very heart of the mountains. It was here that the *barbes*, or pastors, met in annual synod. Sometimes as many as a hundred and fifty would assemble. "We can imagine them seated—it may be on the grassy slopes of the valley—a venerable company of humble, learned, earnest men, presided over by a simple moderator (for higher office and authority was unknown amongst them), and intermitting their deliberations respecting the affairs of their churches, and the condition of their flocks, only to offer their prayers and praises to the Eternal, while the majestic snow-clad peaks looked down upon them from the silent firmament." *

Here, too, was their college where their youth were trained to be sent forth as missionaries to sow the good seed in other lands. Leaving their native valleys, two and two, like the first disciples, they would go forth guised as pedlars

* Dr. Wylie.

to escape suspicion of their real mission. Thus they were admitted into places where, had their real object been known, they would have been spurned with contempt. A curious account has come down to us of the ingenious manner by which they gradually insinuated their real mission to a buyer of their wares; and receives additional interest from being written by one of the Inquisition, that terrible institution which we need hardly inform our readers were the bitterest enemies of the Waldenses. "They offer for sale (it is the inquisitor who speaks) to people of quality, ornamental articles, such as rings and veils. After a purchase has been made, if the pedler is asked, 'Have you anything else to sell?' he answers, 'I have jewels more precious than these things; I would make you a present of them if you would promise not to betray me to the clergy.' Having been assured on this point, he says, 'I have a pearl so brilliant that a man by it may learn to know God; I have another so splendid that it kindles the love of God in the heart of him who possesses it,' and so on. He speaks of pearls metaphorically; then he repeats some portion of Scripture, with which he is familiar, such as that of St. Luke, 'The angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth.'" Thus having gained by this circuitous means the attention of his hearer, he



WALDENSIAN PEDDLERS DISPLAYING THEIR WARES.

would go on to repeat whole passages of Scripture, seldom assuming to expound or set forth his own opinions, but depending on the simple searching words of Scripture to tell their own tale to the heart and conscience. The day only will declare how many were brought by these means out of darkness into His marvellous light; how many of whom it would be true that faith came by hearing and hearing by the word of God. Where he was permitted the Vaudois missionary would leave a copy of the gospels, or some other portion of Scripture.

A period of two years was about the time allowed for these missionary labours; after which they might return again to the repose and security of their valleys. Many, alas! who had gone forth never returned. Some were betrayed by their enemies, seized and cast into prison, where they pined away and died. Others suffered martyrdom. We can imagine with what rejoicing and thanksgiving those who did return, were welcomed by the dwellers in the valleys. Though worn and weary by reason of his wanderings, the well known voice and familiar form of a father or a son would be recognised; and gladly the family and the people would gather around to hear the story of his wanderings, of his trials and joys, and how God had prospered him in the way.



CHAPTER III.

LIFE AND TESTIMONY IN THE VALLEYS.

LET us not forget while recording the simple annals of the Vaudois, that their story derives its interest not merely as the history of a people, but because we see in that history, the purposes of God being fulfilled. It is as we regard them in this light, as a people chosen to be the depository of God's truth, and as forming part of that beautiful *silver thread* of testimony, which, no matter how dark the age, God has always preserved, that our interest is not only awakened but quickened. Yes, although outwardly but poor and lowly mountaineers, the Waldenses were God's chosen witnesses—His representatives in this world. And yet, as we think of their humble estate, are we not reminded that it has seldom been the great or the

noble of the earth whom God has used to fulfil His purposes? Was not David but a humble shepherd boy? Peter only a poor Galilean fisherman? and Martin Luther an obscure miner's son? Yet were these called to be a king, an apostle, and a reformer!

No doubt much of the natural strength of character we discover in the Vaudois—their endurance, their courage, their zeal—was derived from the wild and rugged nature of the region in which they dwelt. Certain it is they were naturally a noble-minded and high-spirited people, though persecuted and despised. Like almost all dwellers in the mountains they lived a simple pastoral life. On the higher ranges of the mountains they tended their flocks, while in the valleys, and on the lower slopes, they cultivated the soil.

A remarkable purity of life, as well as simplicity of manners, characterised the Vaudois. However their enemies might denounce them as heretics, concerning the faith they held, the blamelessness of their lives was not to be disputed. So unquestionable was this that their morality even passed into a proverb—“Any one more than ordinarily exempt from the vices of his time was sure to be suspected of being a Vandés.” The following account from the pen of a Romish writer, who, we may be sure, would not willingly say one word

too favourable, affords a good idea of the life and manners of the Waldenses. "These heretics," he says, "are known by their manners and ways, for they are orderly and modest in their manners and behaviour; they avoid all pride in their habits. To avoid lies, they do not follow trades, but live by the labour of their own hands as handicraftsmen and day-labourers. They do not heap up riches, but are content with necessities. They are also very chaste. They are also very sparing in eating and drinking; they do not frequent taverns and ale houses, neither do they go to balls and other vanities. They abstain from anger. Their women are very modest, avoiding back-biting, foolish jesting and levity of words; and especially they abstain from lies and swearing, not so much as making use of the common asseverations, 'in truth,' 'for certain,' because they look upon them as oaths. They kneel down upon the ground, before a bench, or such like, and pray in silence as long as it might take to repeat the paternoster thirty or forty times, concluding their prayers by repeating the word Amen several times."

One who visited the valleys writes: "Nowhere will you meet with kindlier manners, or more gentle breeding. Be it on the highest mountain, or in the most sequestered vale, the traveller is sure of safety and



WALDENSIAN YOUTH HIDING THE BIBLE.



welcome. Should he be inclined for further acquaintanceship, he will meet all alike, ready to welcome him into their homes, or to guide him on his way."

But interesting and instructive as are these glimpses of Waldensian life, it is rather more with the Christian side of their character—how they testified for Christ—that concerns us here.

The motto they adopted, "*LUX LUCET IN TENEBRIS*"—a light shining in darkness—clearly indicates that the Vaudois were fully aware that God had called them for a special purpose, even to maintain His light and truth in the midst of increasing darkness and error.

The Word of God was the basis of this testimony. It has been said truly of the Vaudois that the Bible was their earliest inheritance, and that they clung to it with a holy pertinacity. They could say with the Psalmist, "Thy word is a light to my feet, and a lamp to my paths" (Psalm cxix. 105). By the light of this divine lamp they discovered the way of truth, and sought diligently to follow in it. They rejected every doctrine which could not be verified by Scripture; for the same light of the Word that revealed the truth, exposed the error and superstition that surrounded them. As they studied the Scriptures they could not but discover the

amazing contrast between the simple apostolic church as set up in early days, and that which then professed to represent it—the Church of Rome. Hence we find the Waldenses in no measured terms denouncing the evil doctrines and practises of the Papacy.

The Pope they regarded as Antichrist. They held also “that temporal offices and dignities were not meet for preachers of the gospel; that the Pope’s pardons were a cheat; that purgatory was a fable; that relics were simply rotten bones which had belonged to one knew not whom; that to go on pilgrimage served no other end, save to empty one’s purse; that flesh might be eaten any day if one’s appetite served him; that holy water was not a whit more efficacious than rain-water; and that prayer in a barn was just as effectual as if offered in a church.”

Not a few writings at various times appeared amongst the Waldenses. The most famous of these was a curious poem called the “Noble Lesson,” written about the twelfth century. There was a belief amongst the early Christians that after the gospel had been preached for a thousand years, Satan was to be loosed, wickedness would increase, and the end of the world be at hand. This belief seems to have taken a strong hold of the Vaudois, and to have occasioned the writing of the “Noble

Lesson," as appears from the opening lines of this quaint poem.

" Oh ! brethren, hear a noble lesson,
We ought always to watch and pray,
For we see this world is near its end.
We ought to be earnest in doing good works,
For we see this world is coming to an end.
Eleven hundred years are fully completed
Since it was written, 'The end of all things is at hand,'
We daily see the signs of this accomplishment,
In the increase of evil and the decrease of good ;
These are the perils that the Scripture mentions,
Which the evangelists have recounted, and St. Paul has
written,
That no man living knows when the end will come."

Another passage in the " Noble Lesson " is very interesting as showing how early the Vaudois were subjected to persecution for continuing in the simple faith of Christ.

" After the Apostles, there were certain teachers who shewed the way of Jesus Christ our Saviour. And some of these are found even at the present time, but they are known to very few.
They greatly desire to point out the way of Jesus Christ
But are so persecuted, that they can do but little.
So blinded by error are the false Christians, and especially
the pastors,
For they persecute and kill those who are better than themselves.
Nevertheless the Scripture says, and we may see it,
That if a person loves those who are good, he will wish to
love God, and to fear Jesus Christ :
And that he will neither curse, nor swear, nor lie, nor kill,
nor defraud his neighbour,
Neither will he take revenge on his enemies,
Now such an one they say is a VAUDES, and deserves to be
put to death."

The conclusion of the " Noble Lesson " is very striking :—

We have only to imitate Jesus Christ, and to do His pleasure
 And to keep firmly that which he has commanded,
 And to be well advised when Antichrist shall come
 That we may give no credence to his doings or to his sayings,
 But according to Scripture, there are many Antichrists,
 For all who are contrary to Christ are Antichrist,
 Many signs and great wonders shall be from this time forward
 to the day of judgment.
 The heaven and the earth shall burn, and all the living
 shall die,
 Then shall He say to the wicked, Depart from me ye accursed,
 &c.
 May it please the Lord who formed the world, that we may
 be of the number of His elect to stand in His courts.

We have quoted at this length from the "Noble Lesson" because it presents, as no words of ours could, the simple faith, and earnest spirit of the Vaudois. It also breathes a beautiful piety—a longing to walk well pleasing to God, and a deep desire 'to point out the way of Jesus Christ' to others. Truly they did not hide their light under a bushel, but were as a city set on a hill, that could not be hid.

Very simple and very real were their gatherings for worship, preaching, &c. These were presided over by their *barbe* or pastor, without any form or ceremony; and frequently in some secluded spot in the valleys, with no other covering save the blue vault of heaven. The *barbes* were true and faithful shepherds to their flocks. In the hour of persecution and danger they were ever present to comfort and encourage, and to direct the drooping heart to trust in God. It is needless to

say how dearly they were loved and valued in return. But beside these pastoral labours, their *barbes* had in charge the education of the youth. Not a few, as we have seen, were trained to become missionaries ; but all without exception were taught in the Scriptures. It is well known what large portions they committed to memory. One poor peasant could repeat the whole book of Job by heart, without missing a word ; others, it is said, had the whole of the New Testament at their fingers' ends.

We shall conclude this sketch by a beautiful picture illustrative of Waldensian life, from the pen of one who was interested, not only in their past history, but in their present welfare : — “ The sun now bursting out illuminates the mouth of a deep cavern, within whose recess we discern a circle of mountain youths, their eyes earnestly fixed on the countenance of a white-haired man, who looks on them with a father's interest as they eagerly drink in the instruction he imparts. And soon the glorious sun has climbed high above the clear horizon, and the circle is broken up. Some of the students seek the shelter of the forest to con their sacred tasks, and some climb the heights, or search the margin of the stream for healing herbs ; but when the dew falls on the herbage and the labour of the vine-dresser is ended, and the

goat-herd has driven home his flock, we see them all cross the green hollow, and stand reverently around the holy man as he reads and explains to them God's sacred Word. The voice of prayer, sweet and solemn, is then heard in this vast wilderness—the voice of one interpreter of the wants and woes of the kneeling mountaineers; and then the full burst of praise mingles with the roar of the descending torrent; and again all is hushed but its brawling waters, as the Christians steal, in silence and secrecy, to their homes, trembling lest even the stars that light them on their way should betray them to their lurking foes."



CHAPTER IV.

EARLY PERSECUTIONS.

WE are now to enter on those terrible persecutions, alas, so indissolubly linked with Waldensian story. Not that we can attempt here anything like a history of these persecutions, but only bring before our readers, some of those more eventful scenes, which while revealing, on the one hand, how dark and cruel the heart of man is when led on by Satan against God, shew, too, on the other, how they can endure with meekness, who are called to suffer for righteousness sake.

We should have to go back to the days of the early Christians, to the persecutions under the cruel Nero or Domitian, to find a parallel of the inhuman sufferings that were almost without intermission inflicted upon the Waldenses.

Were there not abundant testimony, we should hesitate to believe that the barbarities we have to record were really perpetrated. But such is the undeniable fact. For a period extending over more than three centuries, this devoted people were the objects of incessant persecution, the avowed purpose being no less than their utter extirpation.

But, it may be asked, what gave rise to these persecutions? Were the Vaudois not a loyal people, not subject to their rulers, refusing their lawful claims? On the contrary, they were a most loyal and peaceable community. Their rulers, and indeed their enemies, have admitted this in all ages. No, they were not persecuted on this ground; the persecution was from without. And though we shall find that the Vaudois often suffered from the hands of their native princes, it was only as led on by him who not only wielded his spiritual sceptre over the seven hills of Rome, but before whom temporal princes had been compelled to bow, and without question to obey. In short, the Waldensian persecutions had but one source, the Papal power. It was from thence those cruel edicts came forth, that without distinction, committed all to destruction who would not submit to the authority of the *true* church? This was the great test. And this was the test now submitted to the Waldenses.

Would they give up their heresies; would they yield absolute submission to Rome? We know that they would not. They chose rather to suffer persecution than to admit that to be true which was so utterly false and evil.

But few and feeble in early ages, the Romish Church, no doubt, viewed with indifference, if not with contempt, the first protestations of the Waldenses. She was far too absorbed with the increase of her spiritual and temporal dominion, and her successful efforts at obtaining complete supremacy, to be much concerned at the puny opposition of the humble mountaineers. But, as time went on, and the Waldensian doctrines spread, this indifference grew into distrust, until at length, about the year 1200, Pope Innocent III. with a far-seeing eye, discerned in this movement a germ that, if not destroyed, would in time develope and subvert the whole Papal system. "With anxious forebodings," says the historian, "he watched this spirit of religious independence, but how to crush it effectually was the question." The plan at length devised was as infamous as it was cruel and effectual.

A great crusade, such as had been led by Peter the Hermit, to drive out the infidels from the Holy-Land, was proclaimed against the heretics. Their provinces were to be desolated, their cities razed to the ground; and they

themselves utterly destroyed. The *faithful* throughout Europe were summoned to join the *holy* cause for the uprooting of the heretical pest, and the vindication of the true Church. We shudder to record the inducement that was held out to those who would enter on this crusade. "They were told that to shed the blood of the heretics, was to wash away their own sins—and would atone for all the vices and crimes of a lifetime! If, perchance, they died in this *holy* cause, they had the word of the Pope that at the moment of death they should find the angels prepared to carry them aloft, the gates of Paradise open for their reception, and the crowns and delights of the upper world waiting their choice." But this was not all. A more tempting prospect was the share promised in the spoils. As a reward for their faithfulness, the wealth and possessions of the heretics should become theirs.

Dazzled with so golden a prospect of present gain, and of future bliss, thousands flocked to the banner of the Pope's legate, to join the new crusade. Amongst them were some of the most abandoned and profligate characters in Europe, men who had passed all their lives in camps and battle-fields, and were now lured on by the hopes of fresh spoils.

Such was the array, variously estimated at from fifty to five hundred thousand, that Pope



SEARCHING FOR HERETICS.

Innocent III. was preparing to let loose on a simple, harmless, and unoffending people, whose only crime was refusing to submit to the supremacy of Rome!

This was the famous crusade against the Albigenses, a people identical with the Waldenses in regard to the purity of their faith, but who dwelt on the French as the Waldenses on the Italian, side of the Alps. History intimately connects them with the latter.

We shall now give some account of the progress of this crusade before entering upon the persecutions of the Waldenses of Piedmont, which began at a later date.

The mighty host thus gathered together was formed into three great armies, over each of which presided an archbishop, a bishop, and mitred abbot. But the soul of the movement was the notorious Simon de Montfort, one of the darkest names in the annals of persecution. The abbot Arnold (well called the dragon-abbot) was the spiritual, as De Montfort was the military leader, of the hosts. And now they poured over the rich provinces of the Albigenses, "Forward" was the cry of the holy abbot. "You shall ravage every field, you shall slay every human being; strike and spare not. The measure of their iniquity is full, and the blessing of the Church is on your head." Thus commanded by the

priest, the vast army marched through the land of vineyards, and of olive-yards, burning, slaying, ravaging as they went, the peasantry being ridden down and slaughtered in cold blood.

Little or no resistance could be offered in the open country, against so overwhelming and infuriated a host. But the great cities did not as readily submit to be butchered in cold blood. The inhabitants closed their gates on the approach of the crusaders, and when summoned, refused to surrender. The terrible fate of Beziers and Carcassonne, two of the principal cities of the Albigenses, is thus recorded: "The soldiers of the cross, the priests of the Lord," as they called themselves appeared before Beziers: which had been well provisioned and garrisoned. The bishop of the place was in the army; he was allowed by Arnold to offer his advice to the people and recommend a surrender; "Renounce your opinions, and save your lives" was the bishop's advice; but the Albigenses firmly replied that they would not renounce a faith which gave them the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. "Then," said Arnold, "there shall not be left one stone upon another; fire and sword shall devour men, women, and children." The town fell into the hands of the besiegers, and fearfully was the injunction obeyed. The knights, pausing at the gates, asked the abbot how the soldiers were

to distinguish Catholics from heretics ; “ Slay them all,” he replied, “ the Lord knoweth them that are His.” The slaughter began : men, women, children, and clergy were massacred indiscriminately, while the bells of the cathedral were rung till the slaughter was complete. Trembling multitudes fled to the churches, in hope of finding a sanctuary within the hallowed walls ; but not one human being was left alive. The vast population of Beziers, who so lately had thronged the streets and marts, now lay in slaughtered heaps. The numbers, thus slain are estimated variously from twenty to one hundred thousand. The city was given up to plunder, then set on fire.”

Having thus completed their bloody work at Beziers, the crusade moved on to Carcassonne, to inflict a similar vengeance on that devoted city. It is thus graphically described : “ The terrible fate which had overtaken Beziers—in one day converted into a mound of ruins, dreary and silent as any on the plains of Chaldea—told the other towns and villages the destiny that awaited them. The inhabitants, terror stricken, fled to the woods and caves. Even the strong castles were left tenantless, deeming it vain to think of opposing so furious and overwhelming a host. Pillaging, burning, and massacring, the crusaders advanced to Carcassonne. The city

stood on the right bank of the Ande, its fortifications were strong, its garrison numerous and brave, and the young count Raymond Roger, was at their head. The assailants advanced to the walls, but met a stout resistance. The attack was again and again renewed, but was as often repulsed. Meanwhile, the forty days' service was at an end, and bands of crusaders, having fulfilled their term, and earned heaven, were departing to their homes. The Papal legate, seeing the host melting away, judged it perfectly right to call wiles to the aid of his arms. Holding out to Raymond Roger the hope of an honourable capitulation, and swearing to respect his liberty, Arnold induced the viscount to present himself at his tent. 'The latter,' says Sismondi, 'profoundly penetrated with the maxim of Innocent III. that to keep faith with those that have it not is an offence against the faith, caused the young viscount to be arrested, and all the knights who had followed him.

"When the garrison saw that their leader had been imprisoned, they resolved along with the inhabitants, to make their escape over-night by a secret passage known only to themselves. The crusaders were astonished on the morrow, when not a man could be seen upon the walls; and still more mortified was the Papal legate to find that his prey had escaped him, for his

purpose was to make a bonfire of the city, with every man, woman, and child within it. But if this greater revenge was now out of his reach, he did not disdain a smaller one still in his power. He collected a body of some 450 persons, partly fugitives from Carcassonne whom he had captured, and partly the 300 knights who had accompanied the viscount; and of these he burned 400 alive, and the remaining 50 he hanged."

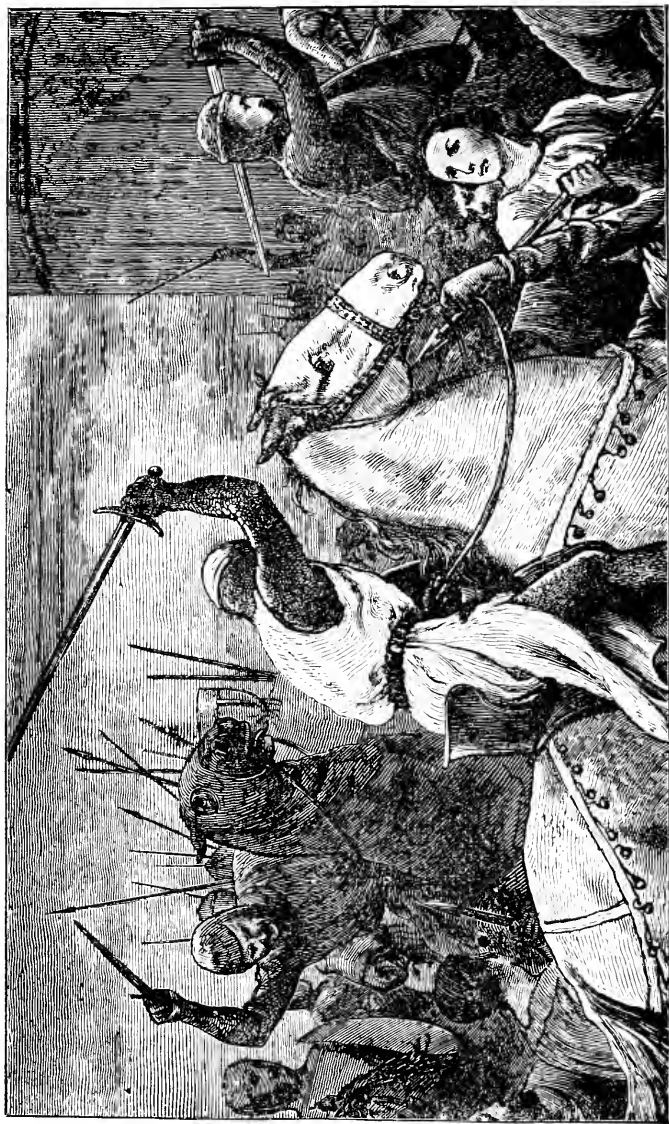
Such were the principal scenes enacted in this terrible crusade against the Albigenses, an inhuman wickedness without a parallel even in the history of crimes. While we blush to think the human heart capable of such enormities, we cannot forget that a just retribution surely awaits the guilty souls of those who committed them. How unspeakably solemn is that woe pronounced by our Lord, "Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea" (Matt. xviii. 6).



CHAPTER V.

THE FIRST GENERAL INVASION OF THE VALLEYS.

FROM the erewhile rich and fertile plains of Dauphiné and Provence, now transformed by the Albigensian crusade into a blackened desert, we return to the Waldenses of Piedmont, who, as yet, had rather dreaded than actually experienced the resentment of Rome. We may not suppose it owing to any spirit of toleration that, for the two succeeding centuries, the Waldenses escaped the fate of their Albigensian brethren. Rather was the occasion wanting, than that Rome exhibited any diminution of zeal for their destruction. Happily for these simple confessors of Christ, it was frequently beyond the power of the Popes to see their cruel projects consummated.



A CRUSADE AGAINST THE VAUDOIS.

The causes of this long lull in the tempest of persecution are not far to seek. The zeal displayed by Innocent III. for the extinction of heresy does not appear to have been equalled by his immediate successors, who, lacking his keen penetration and power, concerned themselves more with the internal affairs of the church, than with the growth of those new opinions which, though slowly, were surely undermining the whole Papal system. It was during this lengthened period that the famous "schism" occurred, when Europe beheld the singular spectacle of three Popes reigning at the same time, each claiming to be the vicar of Christ, and the true successor of St. Peter ! The temporary banishment of the Popes to Avignon was another check on the ambitious projects of the Papacy.

This internal confusion and distraction, threatening at times the very existence of the Romish system, it may be presumed, were the chief causes of that long era of comparative repose enjoyed by the "church of the valleys." During those troublous times, the secular princes, on whom the Papacy depended for the performance of its most cherished designs, were not always on the best of terms with the Popes, nor willing to expend blood and treasure on their behalf. The Albigensian crusade, for example, was led by the Pope's legate, because

the lord of that province refused to obey the edict of Innocent III. to exterminate his own faithful subjects. But a general crusade was an extreme resort, not always to be ventured upon ; so "the Papal thunders," as an historian observes, "often rolled harmlessly over the valleys, and the mountain-home of these confessors was wonderfully shielded till very nearly the era of the Reformation."

There were, however, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, some detached instances of persecution, and one notably of a more general character, which happened at the close of the year 1400. We may notice this, as it will form a link between the great Albigensian crusade, and the first general Papal invasion of the valleys, of which we shall give a more particular account. "The scene of this catastrophe was the Valley of Pragelas. It was the Christmas of 1400, and the inhabitants dreaded no attack, believing themselves sufficiently protected by the snows which then lay deep on their mountains. They were destined to experience the bitter fact that the rigours of the season had not quenched the fire of their persecutors' malice. An inquisitor named Borelli, at the head of an armed troop, broke suddenly into Pragelas, meditating the entire extinction of its population. The miserable inhabitants fled in haste to the

mountains, carrying on their shoulders their old men, their sick, and their infants, knowing what fate awaited them should they leave them behind. In their flight a great many were overtaken and slain. Nightfall brought them deliverance from the pursuit, but no deliverance from horrors not less dreadful. Without shelter, without food, the frozen snow around them, the winter's sky overhead, their sufferings were inexpressibly great. When morning broke, what a heart-rending spectacle did day disclose ! Of the miserable group the hands and feet of many were frozen ; while others were stretched on the snow, stiffened corpses. Fifty young children, some say eighty, were found dead with cold, some lying on the bare ice, others locked in the frozen arms of their mothers, who had perished on that dreadful night along with their babes. In the Valley of Pragelas, to this day, sire recites to son the tale of that Christmas tragedy."

We now pass on to the year 1487, the date of the first general crusade against the Waldenses. At length that lamp, which had burned uninterruptedly since primitive times, was to be extinguished. The mailed hand of the enemy was now about to fall and shatter, for a time at least, the testimony in the mountains. Since the sudden and barbarous attack related above the process of extermination had rather

languished, and in consequence the Waldensian opinions were both taking deeper root, and at the same time spreading far and wide beyond the limits of the valleys. Alarmed at these rapid advances, Pope Innocent VIII., who then filled the Papal chair, determined by a combined and decisive effort, once and for ever, to root out the heretics and the pest of heresy. Emulating the example and vigour of his great namesake, Innocent III., and remembering no doubt how effectually that famous pontiff had swept away the heretics, from the plains of Dauphiné and Provence, he resolved upon the same course.

Once more a crusade was to be preached; once more was Europe to witness the sad and humiliating spectacle of a host of ruffians let loose upon their fellow creatures, to pillage and ravage, torture and slaughter at their will; and this, too, at the dictate of him who presumed to be Christ's vicar upon earth! The same infamous tactics were resorted to, the same horrible inducements again held out, that had characterised the former crusade. Plenary pardon for all their sins, and unrestrained license upon the persons and possessions of the heretics, were the rewards promised to those who faithfully performed their part in this *holy* war. Once more thousands flocked to the banner of the Pope's legate, rejoiced to

avail themselves of heaven on such easy terms. What "dark times," indeed, were these, when men were induced to believe that their crimes could be expiated by the commission of more, and still darker ones!

And now all Europe rang with the din of preparation; bands of men from every country, in obedience to the Papal bull, marched towards the centre from which operations were to commence: "the only people," it is said, "left ignorant of the commotion it had excited, and the bustle of preparation it had called forth, were those poor men on whom the terrible tempest was about to fall."

The joint army numbered about 18,000 regular soldiers, beside the thousands of ruffians already mentioned. This host was divided into two divisions, the one directing an attack from the French, the other on the Italian, side of the Alps; and so advancing, the one from the south-east, and the other from the north-west, to meet in the Valley of Angrogna, the centre of the territory, and there strike the final blow. We will follow first the progress of the French division of this host, that which advanced against the Alps of Dauphiné.

"This portion of the crusade," it is related, "was led by a daring and cruel man, skilled in such adventures, the Lord of La Palu. He ascended the mountains with his

fanatics, and entered the Vale of Loyse, a deep gorge overhung by towering mountains. The inhabitants, seeing an armed force twenty times their number enter their valley, despaired of being able to resist them, and prepared for flight. They placed their old people and children in rustic carts, together with their domestic utensils, and such store of victuals as the urgency of the occasion permitted them to collect, and driving their herds before them, they began to climb the rugged slopes of Mount Pelvoux, which rises some six thousand feet over the level of the valley. They sang canticles as they climbed the steeps, which served at once to smooth their rugged path, and to dispel their terrors.

“About half-way up there is an immense cavern called Aigue-Froid, from the cold springs that rush out from its rocky walls. In front of the cavern is a platform of rock, where the spectator sees beneath him, only fearful precipices, which must be clambered over before one can reach the entrance of the grotto. Into this grotto, as into an impregnable castle, the Vaudois enter. Their women, infants, and old men they placed in the inner hall ; their cattle and sheep they distributed along the internal cavities of the grotto. The able-bodied men posted themselves at the entrance. Having barricaded with huge stones both the doorway

of the cave and the path that led to it, they deemed themselves secure. But a device of their pursuer rendered all these precautions vain. La Palu ascended the mountain on the other side, and approaching the cave from above, let down his soldiers by ropes from the precipice that overhangs the grotto. The platform in front was then secured by his soldiers. The Vaudois might have cut their ropes and defeated their foes as they were being lowered one by one, but the boldness of this manœuvre would seem to have paralysed them. They retreated into the cavern to find in it their grave. La Palu saw the danger of permitting his men to follow them into the depths of their hiding place. He adopted the easier and safer method of piling up at the entrance all the wood he could collect, and setting fire to it. A huge volume of black smoke began to roll into the cave, leaving to the unhappy inmates the miserable alternative of rushing out and falling by the sword that waited for them, or of remaining in the interior to be stifled by the murky vapour. Some rushed out, and were massacred; but the greater part remained till death slowly approached them by suffocation. 'When the cave was afterwards examined,' says Muston, 'there were found in it 400 infants, suffocated in their cradles, or in the arms of their dead mothers.

Altogether there perished in this cavern more than 3,000 Vaudois, including the entire population of Val Loyse.”

Having distributed the property of these poor sufferers amongst the bands of ruffians and assassins that accompanied him, La Palu next advanced upon the neighbouring valleys of Argentière and Fraissinière. But the inhabitants, learning the fate of their brethren, determined upon resistance, as therein only lay their chance of safety. Accordingly they barricaded the passes of the valleys, and showed such a front to the foe when he advanced, that he relinquished the attempt there, and left them in peace.

But this wonderful deliverance was not vouchsafed to the dwellers in the Valley of Pragelus, the scene of the terrible tragedy of Christmas 1400. “Again,” says the historian, “terror, mourning, and death were carried into it. The peaceful inhabitants who were expecting no such invasion, were busy reaping their harvests, when this horde of assassins burst upon them. In the first panic they abandoned their dwellings and fled. Many were overtaken and slain ; hamlets and whole villages were given to the flames ; nor could the caves in which multitudes sought refuge afford any protection. The horrible barbarity of the Val Loyse was repeated in the Valley

of Prægelus. Combustible materials were piled up, and fires kindled at the mouths of their hiding-places; and when extinguished all was silent within. Folded together in one motionless heap lay mother and babe, patriarch and stripling; while the fatal smoke, which had cast them into that deep sleep, was eddying along the roof, and slowly making its exit into the clear sunlit summer sky."

Thus, having only too successfully accomplished his part of the murderous design, La Palu paused awhile in his bloody work, and awaited the approach of the Piedmontese division advancing from the other side. But it was destined never to reach that secluded spot. The story of the failure of this expedition, headed by the Pope's legate Catanio, will form the subject of our next chapter.



CHAPTER VI.

FAILURE OF CATANEO'S EXPEDITION AGAINST PIEDMONT.

ACROSS the broad smiling plains of Piedmont, in the direction of La Torre—the entrance to the valleys—marched Cataneo, the Pope's legate. Following, with uplifted crucifix, and banners flying, bearing the emblem of the cross, was a confused host of brutal soldiery and assassins, hired by Cataneo to carry out his cruel schemes; and who awaited with impatience for the signal, like bloodhounds, to spring forward and destroy. Agonised must have been the feelings of the poor Vaudois, as they gazed across those sweeping plains, and beheld the onward progress of this army of destruction. Too well they divined its terrible intent. There could be no mistaking the meaning of that uplifted crucifix and that

cross-emblemèd banner. The long-threatened crusade had begun; the holy war which had been preached against the Vaudois had succeeded; and now the relentless enemy was in full cry for their blood.

Although their impending fate was enough to have made the stoutest heart quake, the Vaudois remained calm and peaceful. Falling down on their knees, they pleaded for help to Him who had shielded them in the past, and who could now fight their battle, and defeat the adversary. Nor did they plead in vain, as the sequel will shew; for scarcely of that proud host did one return to tell the tale of disaster which had befallen it. But we must not anticipate.

Arrived before La Torre, Cataneo, in order to have some pretext for the cruel deeds he meditated, despatched a band of monks with the professed intention of converting the men of the valleys. So far, however, from their efforts availing, it is said they gained not a single convert. This pretence over, Cataneo prepared to set his soldiers in motion.

Meanwhile the Waldenses had sent down two of their patriarchs to seek an interview with Cataneo, and persuade him, if it were possible, not to pursue his cruel project, but depart and leave them in peace. "Do not condemn us without hearing us," said these venerable pleaders, "for we are Christians and



THE VAUDOIS FLEAD FOR HELP.

faithful subjects, and our Barbes are prepared to prove that our doctrines are conformable to the Word of God . . . Our hope in God is greater than our desire to please men ; beware how you draw down upon yourselves His anger by persecuting us ; for remember, if God so will it, all the forces you have assembled against us will nothing avail."

Thus meekly, but firmly, because knowing in whom was their trust, did these brave men plead the cause of their Vaudois brethren. But as well might they have appealed to the nether mill-stone, as to the hearts of the Pope's legate and his ruffian followers. Spurning their entreaties, and anathematizing the Vaudois as unpardonable heretics ripe for destruction, Cataneo laid a scheme that would insure (as he thought) the complete extinction of the heretics, but as the event proved, only to his own total discomfiture and defeat.

Never doubting but that his men-at-arms would make short work of the unarmed herdsmen, he divided his army into numerous small divisions, hoping by means of a simultaneous attack at various points to strike a sudden and decisive blow. This, however, as we have said, proved his destruction. Separated into small straggling parties, these were speedily attacked and easily defeated by the hardy mountaineers ; others, losing their way, wan-

dered they knew not where, till night overtaking them, or becoming suddenly enveloped in the mountain mists, they fell over into yawning precipices, and so miserably perished.

It will be remembered that the plan of this combined expedition, led on the west side of the Alps by La Palu, and on the east by Cataneo, was to traverse the valleys from opposite points, sweeping out the heretics along their course, and finally to unite to the Valley of Angrogna, there, in the very seat of the heresy, to celebrate their triumph.

The only too successful expedition of La Palu we have followed: we left it pausing awhile after its fiendish work, awaiting the approach of Cataneo from Piedmont. When the Pope's legate, therefore, broke up his army into the small attacking parties just mentioned, these troops were enjoined to make their way to the Valley of Angrogna, so soon as they had completed the work of exterminating the inhabitants on their way.

We may follow the course of one of these troops as an example of the terrible fate that, with few exceptions, befel the rest. When the arm of the Lord is uplifted for the defence of His people, who shall stand before Him?

This expedition, numbering about 700 men, started across the Col Julien, one of the highest mountains of the range. Onwards, and ever

higher and higher, the soldiers toiled, the only footpath being that made by the herdsman as he tended his sheep on the steep mountain side. Silence reigns, for the inhabitants have all fled. Still they travel onwards, bearing their weapons to be employed, not in genuine warfare, but as the instruments of cowardly massacre. At length the summit is reached, and they prepare to descend stealthily into the valley beneath. Climbing on their hands and knees the steep grassy slope, they looked down from the head of the pass on the Valley of Prali, at that moment a scene of peace.

Over the bosom of the plain were scattered numerous hamlets. "The peasants," we are told, "were at work in the meadows and corn-fields; their children were at play; their herds were browsing in their pastures. Suddenly, on the mountains above, had gathered this flock of vultures that with greedy eyes were looking down upon their prey. A few hours, and these dwellings (thought they) would be in flames, their inmates slaughtered, and their herds and goods carried off as booty. Impatient to begin their work these 700 assassins rushed down on the plains. The troop had reckoned that no tidings of their approach having reached this secluded valley, they would fall upon its unarmed peasants as falls the avalanche, and crush them. But it was not to

be so. Instead of fleeing panic-struck, as the intruders expected, the men of Prali hastily assembled, and stood to their defence. The weapons of the Vaudois were rude, but their trust in God and their just indignation at the cowardly and bloody assault, gave them strength and courage. The soldiers, wearied with the rugged slippery tracks they had traversed, fell beneath the blows of their opponents."

Of the 700 who had started on the cruel errand but one survived to tell the tale of this disaster. Escaped unseen during the fray, he had hidden in a deep cave, until hunger and cold compelled him to come out and cast himself upon the mercy of the Vaudois. With a noble generosity little deserved they spared him, and sent him back over the Col Julien to tell his leader Cataneo that the Vaudois had courage to fight for their hearths and their altars; and that God was with them to deliver them out of the cruel hand of their enemies.

We left Cataneo before the gates of La Torre. He is now about to force an entrance into the Val Angrogna. The humble supplication of the Waldenses having been treated with contempt, as we have already seen, it remained with them either to submit, or be butchered in cold blood, or to fight. One of these three courses they must adopt, and they

chose the last. Wonderfully and naturally fortified, their territory offered every obstacle to an invader. A few resolute men could hold their narrow passes against thousands; and whether rightly or wrongly, they judged that God had surrounded them with this great natural rampart of mountains expressly as a means of defence and protection against their enemies, and the enemies of His truth.

Accordingly they prepared to contest the advance of the Pope's legate, and his ruffian troops. First of all they removed the women and children, and all unable to bear arms, to a place of safety. Away up the mountain side they could be seen transporting their household stuff, while they made the hills resound again with their hymns, breathing forth unbounded confidence in God. Those who remained to meet the enemy were divided into small companies, and posted in advantageous positions for defence.

"Cataneo now put his soldiers in motion. Advancing to near the town of La Torre, they made a sharp turn to the right, and entered the Val di Angrogna. Its opening offers no obstruction, being soft and even as any meadow in England. By-and-bye it begins to swell on the heights of Rocomaneot, where the Vaudois had resolved to make a stand. Their fighting men were

posted along its ridge. Their armour was of the simplest. The bow was almost their only weapon of attack. They wore bucklers of skin, covered with the bark of the chestnut tree, the better to resist thrust of pike or cut of sword. In the hollow behind, protected by the rising ground on which their fathers, husbands, and brothers were posted, were a number of women and children gathered there for shelter.

“The attacking host now pressed up the acclivity, letting fly a shower of arrows as they advanced, and the Waldensian line on which their missiles fell seemed to waver, and be on the point of giving way. Those behind, espying the danger, fell on their knees, and, extending their hands in supplication to the God of battles, cried aloud, ‘O God of our fathers, help us! O God, deliver us!’ That cry was heard by the attacking host, and especially by one of its captains, Le Noir of Mondovi, or the Black Mondovi, a proud, bigoted, blood-thirsty man. He instantly shouted out that his soldiers would give the answer, accompanying his threat with horrible blasphemies. The Black Mondovi raised his visor as he spoke. At that instant an arrow from the bow of Pierre Revel, of Angrogna, entering between his eyes, transfixed his skull and he fell on the earth a corpse. The fall of

this daring leader disheartened the Papal army. The soldiers began to fall back. They were chased down the slopes by the Vaudois, who now descended upon them like one of their own mountain torrents. Having driven their invaders to the plain, cutting off not a few in their flight, they returned as the evening began to fall, to celebrate with songs, on the heights where they had won it, the victory with which it had pleased the God of their fathers to crown their arms."

Transported with rage and shame at being defeated by a few unarmed herdmen, Cataneo prepared a second attack, vowing a double vengeance on the poor Vaudois, when once they were within his power. But the Pope's legate had to learn that it was one thing to threaten, and another to perform. Better would it have been for him and his followers, had they learned wisdom by their first defeat and desisted, for a second was to overtake them, more awful, irretrievable, and from which there would be no escape.



CHAPTER VII.

A WONDERFUL DELIVERANCE

THE Pope's legate reassembled his scattered troop with all speed, and once more pressed forward to effect an entrance into the Valley of Angrogna. This second attempt promised at first to be successful; for the Vaudois had meanwhile abandoned the heights of Rocomaneot—the scene of their late victory—and retired into the recesses of their mountains, to the Pra del Tor, in the Valley of Lucerne. Though they had been successful in checking Cataneo's first attack, they could not hope to finally defeat him. Besides, they knew that the Pra del Tor was almost impregnable, and could only be reached



A SCENE IN THE ALPS.



by traversing a series of narrow, dangerous defiles, on every available point of which the Vaudois could post themselves, and harass and impede the advance of an invader.

Surprised, therefore, that the Vaudois were offering no resistance, Cataneo rapidly advanced and gained possession of the Val Angrogna: but, finding that the inhabitants had all fled, he rashly determined, heedless of the fearful danger, to press forward into the narrow passes beyond. Little did the Pope's legate and his followers think, as they entered those gloomy fastnesses, what an awful fate awaited them, and how many were to find therein a tomb! On either hand, vast, frowning rocks overhung their path; mighty chestnut trees flung their branches across the way, veiling them in deepest gloom; while far below they could hear the muffled roar of the wild cataract, as it swept along its rocky course. All went well, however, with the expedition, until the "Barricade," a steep, unscaleable mountain, came in sight. Behind this huge rampart was the Pra, where the Waldenses had retired, and which Cataneo knew must be passed, ere he could reach his prey. What was to be done? Must the Papal army return without achieving its purpose? It seemed as if it must. Cataneo could see the white peaks round the Pra, but how was he to

surmount the huge "Barricade" which towered up between?

Unhappily for himself, he searched for an entrance, and found one. Some mighty convulsion of nature had here rent the rocks, and formed a frightful gorge, which led up to the head of the valley beyond. The Papal leader boldly ordered his troop to enter and traverse this dangerous defile, though the only footway was a narrow ledge on the rock, hung halfway between the stream far below, and the utmost summit of the mountain above. So narrow was this path, that only two men could walk abreast, and, if attacked, fight or retreat were alike impossible.

Into this terrible defile Cataneo's host now advanced. Slowly and cautiously, they crept along the ledge of rock, every step bringing them nearer to the Pra. It seemed that after all the Waldenses were not to escape. Once past this danger, the Pope's legate knew that there was nothing to hinder the full execution of his vengeance. But there was one thing he had not taken into account. He knew not that God was watching over the Vaudois, and that He was able by a breath to destroy Cataneo and his host, and that He was now about to do it. Of the Papal leader, as of a former persecutor of His people, God said, "I will put my hook in thy jaws, and my bridle in thy

lips, and I will cause thee to return by the way which thou camest."

This wonderful deliverance has been so graphically related by a recent historian of the Waldenses that we shall here cite it in full. "By what agency was the advance of that host to be stayed? Will some mighty angel smite Cataneo's army, as he did Sennacherib's? No angel blockaded the pass. Will thunderbolts and hailstones be rained upon Cataneo's soldiers, as of old on Sisera's? The thunders slept; the hail fell not. Will earthquake and whirlwind discomfit them? No earthquake rocked the ground; no whirlwinds rent the mountains. The instrumentality now put in motion to shield the Vaudois from destruction was one of the lightest and frailest in all nature; yet no bars of adamant could have more effectually shut the pass, and brought the march of the host to an instant halt. A white cloud, no bigger than a man's hand, unobserved by the invaders, but keenly watched by the Vaudois, was seen to gather in the mountain's summit. That cloud grew bigger and blacker. It began to descend. It came rolling down the mountain's side, wave on wave, like an ocean tumbling out of heaven—a sea of murky vapour. It fell right into the chasm in which was the Papal army, sealing it up, and filling it from top to bottom with a thick black fog. In a moment

the host were in night; they were bewildered stupified, and could see neither before nor behind, could neither advance nor retreat. They halted in a state bordering on terror.

“The Waldenses interpreted this as an interposition of Providence on their behalf. It had given them the power of repelling the invader. Climbing the slopes of the Pra and issuing from all their hiding-places, they spread themselves over the mountains, the paths of which were familiar to them; and while the host stood riveted beneath them caught in the double toils of the defile and the mist, they tore up the great stones and rocks, and sent them thundering down into the ravine. The Papal soldiers were crushed where they stood. Nor was this all. Some of the Waldenses entered the chasm, sword in hand, and attacked them in front. Consternation seized the Papal host. Panic impelled them to flee, but their effort to escape was more fatal than the sword of the Vaudois or the rocks that, swift as arrows, came bounding down the mountain. They jerked one another; they threw each other down in the struggle; some were trodden to death, others were rolled over the precipice, and crushed on the rocks below, or drowned in the torrent, and so perished miserably.”

Thus wonderfully at the eleventh hour did God rescue His people from the cruel hand of

the destroyer. When that fatal mist had rolled away, and the Vaudois looked down from the heights above, not a trace remained of the invading host. Down, deep down in the awful abyss beneath they could just discern the mangled bodies of their pursuers, while, here and there a human form hung transfixed upon a projecting rock, caught as it had been hurled from the heights above. No wonder that songs of triumph and deliverance re-echoed through the valleys, as the Vaudois beheld, like Israel of old, their enemies dead upon the mountain sides.

So ended Cataneo's expedition. Of the 18,000 regular troops, and almost as many irregular followers, few ever returned to their homes. "They left their bones," says the same historian, "on the mountains they came to subdue. They were cut off mostly in detail. They were led weary chases from valley to mountain, and from mountain to valley. The rocks rolled upon them, gave them at once death and burial. They were met in narrow defiles and cut to pieces. Flying parties of Waldenses would suddenly appear from the mist or from some cave known only to themselves, attack and discomfit the foe, and then as suddenly retreat into the friendly vapour or the sheltering rock. Thus it came to pass in the words of Muston, 'This army of invaders vanished from the

Vaudois mountains as rain in the sands of the desert.' ”

Not that the Waldenses escaped unspeakable sufferings : we saw how they fared at the cruel hands of La Palu, the leader of the French expedition. Thousands perished during this fearful visitation. Mothers with their infants were together rolled sheer down the mountain sides ; others were hanged, shot, or suffered the most excruciating tortures. Whole villages were destroyed. The smiling peaceful valleys of the Vaudois were transformed into dreary desolation and ruin. Truly it was a sore hour of trial for the poor Waldenses and a severe test of their trust and confidence in God. Yet they wavered not. Boldly they clung to the faith that they had ever held more precious than life, abiding the time when He, who would not lay upon them a greater burden than they could bear, should stay the hand of the oppressor, and restore peace and quiet to the valleys.

A whole year war hung about the mountains, till at last, as Leger says, “ God turned the heart of their prince toward this poor people.” He sent for twelve deputies to give an account of this strange faith, to which the men of the valleys adhered with such tenacity. These men on being admitted into the duke’s presence, gave so excellent an account of themselves,

that he frankly owned he had been misled, and was much moved at the terrible suffering that had been inflicted.

He now became deeply interested in his subjects, and expressed a wish to see some of the children of the Vaudois. These were duly brought by their mothers from the Valley of Angrogna. The duke, when he saw them—twelve fine, plump, rosy boys and girls—was much surprised, having been told that “the Vaudois children were monsters, with only one eye, placed in the middle of the forehead, four rows of black teeth, and similar deformities.”

So ended this terrible crusade, and once more ‘the Church of the valleys’ had repose. Though it was long ere she recovered from this terrible ordeal, the lamp of testimony to a pure and simple faith never totally expired. It was destined to remain there,—to burn even brighter and brighter, and spread even farther and farther until its rays should mingle with the glorious day-dawn of the Reformation. The light diffused by Peter Waldo, when driven an exile into Bohemia, had by the instrumentality of Huss and Jerome, still further been extended, until God should raise up one other witness, Martin Luther, through whom darkness and superstition in a great measure were to flee away.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE ERA OF THE REFORMATION.

THE twenty-eight years' peace that followed the Papal invasion of 1488, carry us onward to the dawn of the Reformation. It will afford a relief from the harrowing details of persecution to glance aside for a moment at the link which connected the Waldenses with that ever-memorable event.

The Reformation, although instrumentally the work of Martin Luther, was in reality but the natural effect of a great existing cause. The mass of mankind in Europe had long groaned under the ruthless tyranny of the Papacy. They longed for deliverance. For centuries degraded almost to the level of the beast, ignorant and superstitious to the last degree, the time of awakening had now arrived, and men began to grope about, if, perchance, they might

find the light. Nor did they seek in vain. Perhaps the first thing this new-found light revealed was the true character of the Papacy. Men saw that it was a huge imposture. They ceased to believe in it. They finally despised it. Still, the yoke of Rome was upon their necks, and they knew not as yet how to remove it. But from this hour the power of the Papacy rapidly declined. Her days were numbered. Men were no longer content to live in falsity and darkness; they would no longer be deceived; they would have God's light and truth. The Reformation must come. It was, as we said, but the natural effect of a great cause. "When the train is properly laid, an accidental spark may cause the explosion," and, when the right moment had arrived, God raised up an instrument in Martin Luther to accomplish this.

Preeminent amongst those in whose labours the seeds of the Reformation had been sown, stand the Waldenses. The tenacity with which they had clung to the Word of God; their strict adherence to the faith "once delivered to the saints"; their utter rejection of Popery; and their untiring missionary labours, had all contributed in a marvellous degree to bring about that great and happy change. And now, after centuries of patient watching, and devoted testimony, they were to witness the glorious harvest of the Reformation. Who can

tell the unspeakable joy that filled the hearts of the Vaudois, when the wondrous tidings reached their secluded valleys? It is said they "were as men that dreamed." The news seemed too good to be true. They must have them confirmed. Eagerly they sent forth one of their pastors, on a mission of inquiry. Soon he returned with the amazing intelligence that the Reformation was indeed an accomplished fact; that the Gospel was being openly preached in Germany, in Switzerland, and in France; and that every day large numbers were being added to those who now professed the same doctrines to which the Vaudois had borne witness from ancient times. As a proof he produced several books, containing the views of the Reformers.

Thus to find their long-deferred hopes fulfilled, was at once a spring of divine consolation and strength to the Vaudois. Their fainting spirits revived. They were now no longer alone on the battle field. Their first impulse was to see and co-operate with the great leaders of the Reformation. Accordingly they sent two of their most devoted pastors charged with letters for *Æcolampadius*, at Basle, to *Capiton* and *Martin Bucer*, of Strasburg, to *Berthold Haller*, of Berne, and others of the Reformers. "The visit of these two pastors of the ancient Church gave unspeakable joy to the Reformer of

Basle. He heard in them the voice of the Church primitive and apostolic, speaking to the Christians of the sixteenth century, and bidding them welcome within the gates of the city of God." In his letter, October 13th, 1530, he says, "We render thanks to our most gracious Father, that He has called you into such marvellous light, during ages in which such thick darkness has covered almost the whole world under the empire of Antichrist. We love you as brethren." Equally well were they received by the other Reformers, who affectionately tendered their loving counsel and advice. With the letters the Vaudois pastors also submitted a statement of their faith, desiring the Reformers to consider and point out if in anywise the Reformed doctrines differed from those of the ancient Church. Their earnest wish was to be in full fellowship and co-operation. They desired to be regarded as a branch of the one true Church of Christ.

But one only of the two deputies sent by the Vaudois returned, bearing the letters from the Reformers. His beloved companion, suspected, from some cause or another, had been seized at Dijon, cast into prison, and was ultimately condemned and burned. The letters now delivered by the surviving pastor, awakened the deepest interest in the various churches of the Vaudois. Their contents were eagerly scanned

to see if the views they held touching the faith were confirmed by the Reformers. The great doctrines held by both Churches were found to be essentially the same. But there were many minor questions, not so clear. After sending, therefore, once more to the Reformers for advice, and after repeated interchange of views it was finally decided to convene a synod in the Valleys, at which all the questions between the two Churches might be considered, and the future relations of the two Churches be determined.

A hearty invitation was now sent out, which was joyously responded to. All the Waldensian Churches were represented. The Albigenians also sent deputies to it. The Waldensian colonies in Calabria sent their pastors to be present. On the part of the Reformers attended William Farel and Anthony Saunier, from the Churches of French Switzerland. There were also some deputies present from the Churches of Bohemia.

It was on the 12th of October, 1532, that this famous convention met. The town of Chamforans, in the heart of the Valley of Angrogna, was the chosen spot. Thus was "the valley of Angrogna, again invaded by strangers; not, however, as heretofore, by those 'whose feet are swift to shed blood,' but by such as were



A VILLAGE IN THE VAL ANGROGNA.

‘shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace,’ by bands of thoughtful men, soldiers of the cross.” The synod sat for six days, during which all the questions raised in the communications from the Protestant Churches were freely discussed, and the result made known in a “Short Confession of Faith,” which Monastier says “ may be considered as a supplement to the ancient confession of faith of the year 1120, seeing that it does not contradict it in any point.”

But perhaps the happiest result of this great convention was the increased spiritual effort that followed. The fainting spirits of the Vauds revived. They now set about rebuilding their churches. For fifty years the bitter persecutions they had suffered prevented all public worship in the valleys. Near to the spot where the synod met, was erected the first of many churches which speedily followed. Fresh pastors came forward to preach to the multitudes that flocked to hear the Word of life. Once more living waters flowed through the land.

Yet one other token was given by this ancient Church of the vitality that still remained ; namely, the translation of the Scriptures into the French tongue. This was in accordance with a resolution passed at the synod that the Waldensian Churches, should at

their own cost, translate and print an edition of the Old and New Testament in the French tongue, and present it as a gift to the Churches of the Reformation. "A most appropriate and noble gift! That Book which the Waldenses had received from the primitive Church, which their forefathers had preserved with their blood—which their barbes had laboriously translated and circulated—they now put into the hands of the Reformers, constituting along with themselves the custodians of this, the ark of the world's hopes." This work cost no less than 1,500 crowns of gold, a large sum for so poor a people; yet it was cheerfully subscribed.

In tracing thus the connection of the Waldenses with the Reformation, down to the date of the synod of Chamforans, we have been carried onward to the end of the twenty-eight years' peace so profitably employed, by the Churches of the valleys. The storm, alas, is again gathering. A fiercer persecution than ever is about to burst in desolating ruin over Piedmont. The hand is upraised to strike, but before it falls let us glance at a few noble instances of individual suffering that had taken place meanwhile.

A distinguished pastor of the Vaudois, Martin Gounin, of Angrogna, returning one day from Geneva, was apprehended at Dauphine, on

suspicion of being a spy. He cleared himself of that charge, but the jailor searching his person discovered certain papers, which were considered by the Parliament of Grenoble to involve him in a still greater crime—heresy. Condemned without appeal, he was led forth at night, and drowned in the river Isère. Had not his persecutors feared the effect of his dying words on the people, he would have suffered at the stake. Others, however, ascended the martyr-pile. Two other pastors, likewise returning from Geneva, to their flocks in the valleys, were, with three French Protestants, seized and carried to Chambéry. There all five were condemned and burned at the stake. Another instance is still more touching. A young student of theology was returning home from Geneva for his holidays. His heart yearned to be once more among his native mountains, and the fond parents were joyously awaiting his return. But, alas, he came not. Travelling by the Pass of St. Bernard, he had just passed the Italian frontier, when he was apprehended on the suspicion of heresy. “It was the month of May, when all was life and beauty in the vales and mountains around him; he himself was in the spring-time of existence; it was hard to lay down life at such a moment, but the great Captain from whose feet he had just come, had taught him that the first duty

of a soldier of Christ is obedience. He confessed his Lord, nor could promise, or threats—and both were tried—make him waver. He continued steadfast unto the end, and on the 4th of May, 1557, he was brought forth from his dungeon and burned alive.”

These are but a few of many who counted it all joy to suffer for Christ’s sake, during those dark and perilous times. What a joy to know that they have now gained the martyr’s crown, and are at rest with Him whom they were not ashamed to confess on earth—with Him who will one day confess them before the angels in heaven.



CHAPTER IX.

THE PERSECUTION UNDER LA TRINITA.

WE have seen that the Reformation was to the Vaudois, the very fulfilment of their long-cherished hopes. In it they saw the abundant and triumphant answer to centuries of patient watching and testimony. Not in vain had their fathers sown the precious seed, though often, alas, in tears and blood; for now the blessed harvest time had come, and the golden sheaves were ready to be gathered in. No longer were they alone to be—

“The watchers of a beacon whose light can never die.”

Now the long dark night was past; but that lonely light in the mountains burned brightly to the last, even until the day dawned, and the dark shadows had fled away.

Amid the great and general felicity created

by the advent of the Reformation, one cause of exceeding sorrow remained. There was as yet no peace. Destined as the Reformation was in time to stay the cruel hand of persecution, the day was still far distant. For a century and a half there ensued a time of suffering unexampled in the past. Persecution now became general against all who professed the Reformed faith, but the cruelties inflicted on the Waldenses surpassed in severity them all.

It was towards the close of 1534, scarcely two years after the peaceful conference of Chamforans, that rumours of an impending persecution reached the valleys. Happily, however, the storm that threatened was for a time averted. Political events turned the current of the persecutor's zeal, and for a further season the Vaudois enjoyed a continuance of peace and repose. Meanwhile, the enemy was maturing his plans for another attack, and only waiting the opportunity to carry a war of extermination into the heart of the mountains.

About this period (1536) Piedmont, by the fortune of war, passed into the possession of the King of France. After being subject to that kingdom for twenty-three years, it was restored to its rightful sovereign, the Duke of Savoy, on the 3rd of April, 1559. This was a cause of great joy to the Vaudois, who looked for tranquil

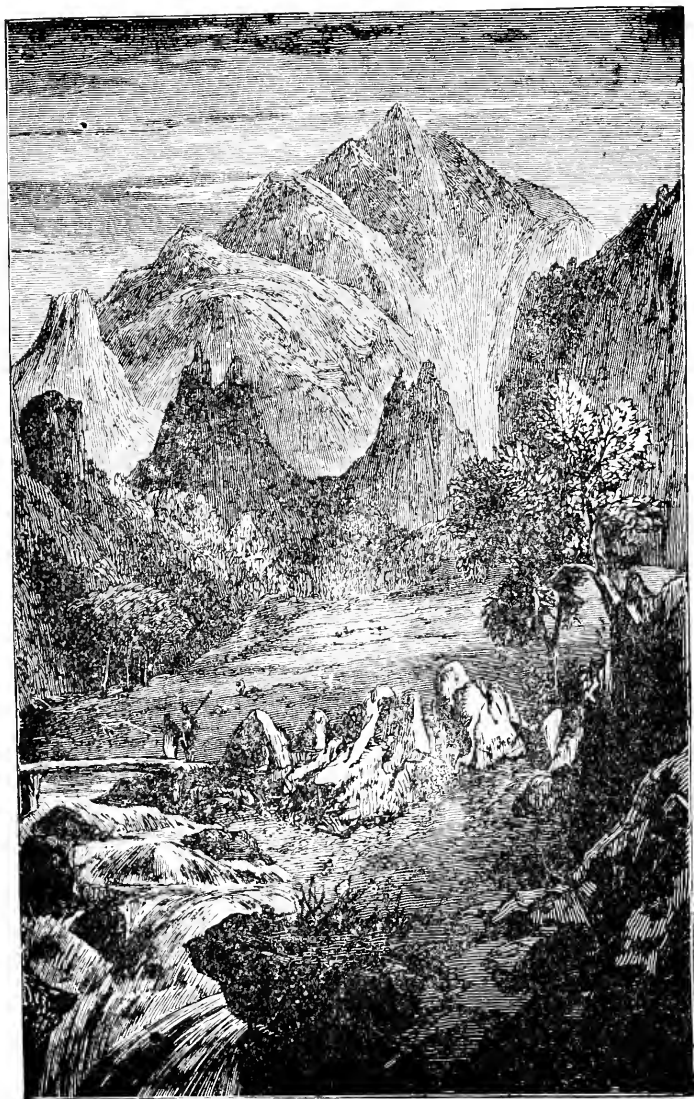
times on the accession of the young duke, who had just married the Princess Margaret of France, a relative of the celebrated Queen of Navarre, the defender of the Reformed faith. But, alas, there was in the treaty of peace that had restored the young duke to his dominions, a most alarming condition. He therein promised to wage a continuous warfare against heresy and the new opinions of the Reformation; and, furthermore, engaged to stamp out, with the utmost vigour, the long and deep-rooted heresy that existed in his own dominion of Piedmont. "Thus in sending back the Duke of Savoy," says one writer, "they armed him with a dagger, and forced him to promise that he would plunge it into the hearts of the most faithful of his subjects." Here, then, was the occasion for which the enemy waited. This artfully-laid scheme for further persecution was all the work of the Papacy; hard, cruel, unrelenting as ever.

When the existence of this article in the treaty became known to the Vaudois, it cast a deep gloom over the whole of their valleys. Instead of peace and tranquility, as they had fondly hoped would follow the accession of the young prince, they now saw that a fresh persecution was inevitable. Nor were they mistaken. No sooner was the duke reinstated, than an edict was proclaimed throughout the valleys,

commanding all his subjects to "attend mass on pain of death." To carry out this cruel decree a commission was given to the Count de la Trinita, a prince of the blood, a furious Catholic, and one eager to uproot the hated heresy.

While the storm was gathering, and after its first shock had fallen upon those confessors who dwelt at the foot of the Alps, the churches of Piedmont assembled from all the valleys to deliberate on the steps that should be taken. It was a time of deep anxiety and sorrow. Well they knew what would follow the refusal to obey the royal edict. Already were the Duke's forces on the march to enforce it. But they could not violate their consciences by attending "mass," they were convinced that they ought to obey God rather than man; and though, as dutiful subjects of their prince, the Vaudois were prepared to obey every reasonable demand, when that demand came in between their souls and God, they must stand firm, be the result what it may.

One very faint hope of escape, however, remained. After much humiliation, prayer, and fasting, the men of the valleys resolved to send a solemn protest to their prince, which should be at once an humble remonstrance, and petition; and which should also set forth the state of their affairs, and the justness of their



THE PASS OF PRA DEL TOR.

cause. In this famous protest the Vaudois claimed first of all the right to be heard—a right denied to no one accused, however criminal. They next most fully and solemnly disclaimed the main charge against them—that of departing from the true faith, and of adopting doctrines not found in the Scriptures, and unknown to the early ages of the Church. “Their faith,” said they, “was that which Christ Himself had taught; which the Apostles, following their great Master, had preached; which the fathers had vindicated with their pens, and the martyrs with their blood, and which the first four Councils had ratified, and proclaimed to be the faith of the Christian world. They were willing any moment to appeal their cause to a General Council, provided that Council were willing to decide the question by the only infallible standard they knew—the Word of God. If on this evidence they should be convicted of even one heresy, most willingly would they surrender it.” After this simple but powerful exposition of their faith, they advert to the purity and blamelessness of their lives, their loyalty to the throne, and the services which they had always heartily rendered in the past, and which they were still prepared to render. One thing only they could not surrender, and that was their conscience.

This petition the Churches of the Alps now prepared to despatch to the Duke. But where was the man who could hold his life so cheap as to venture on this dangerous mission? Happily one of their pastors, M. Gillies, a devoted and courageous man, undertook to lay the petition at the foot of the throne. Meanwhile the Waldenses waited with mingled feelings of hope and fear for the result. Their hopes, indeed, were small; but their eyes were turned to heaven, and if the answer should be peace how well! if otherwise, they were ready to accept the alternative; they were not afraid to die.

Three months passed away before reply or edict of any kind reached the valleys. In the meantime the persecution had fairly commenced, and the expedition under La Trinita was every day drawing nearer to the mountains. Already had desolation and ruin marked its advance across the adjacent plains of Piedmont; a brief space, and La Trinita with his soldiers would be amongst them to ravage and destroy. At length, a reply was received from the Duke, but the conditions imposed were such as the Waldenses could not accept. While tacitly acknowledging the justice of the Vaudois' claims, the Duke still threatened persecution, and even extermination, if they refused to return to the pale of the Romish Church. Thus

were the worst fears of this poor suffering people realized; and they saw before them a long vista of terrible trial, misery, and woe.

We have no space, nor shall we weary the reader with all the details of the fearful scenes that followed. Eager for blood, and with an eye for the possessions of the heretics, the followers of La Trinita, when the word was given, rapidly advanced toward the valleys, thinking to effect an easy entrance. But the Vaudois, remembering how, in the past, God had fought wonderfully for their deliverance, had once more placed their cause in His hand. With earnest supplication they besought that the enemy might be defeated, even at the threshold of their homes, and the lives of His people be preserved. Nor was this appeal made in vain. Again and again, La Trinita attempted, like his Papal predecessor Cataneo, to force an entrance into the valleys. But each succeeding attack only proved more disastrous than the last; until, at length, baffled and furious, he reluctantly withdrew his troops. The hardy mountaineers were too strong for him: he would try other, and less hazardous, means to secure the same ends. If the Vaudois were bold and fearless, he knew they were also singularly guileless and unsuspecting: and it was with the arts of duplicity and lying, La Trinita

now thought to accomplish what, by his arms, he had failed to achieve.

Accompanying the crusade was an inquisitor named Jacomel, one as cunning as he was cruel. La Trinita found in him a suitable tool to carry out these fresh tactics, and at once set him to work. Making his way into the valleys, Jacomel, under the pretence of desiring peace, and feigning at the same time a love for the Gospel, gathered the leading men of the Waldenses together, and prevailed on them to meet La Trinita, assuring them that all would speedily end well. La Trinita then assumed a marked tone of moderation. He said it was no pleasant business in which the Duke had engaged him, but that peace, he believed, could easily be secured if they were willing to make some slight concession; ending a long harangue by inviting them to lay down their arms, and—just for form's sake—permit him with a small train to celebrate mass in the Church of St. Lorenzo in Angrogna, and afterwards pay a visit to the Pra del Tor.

Such was the simplicity and confidingness of the Waldenses, that they fell in with this proposal, though there were some amongst them who were strongly averse to accepting it. Next day the Papal leader entered the valleys, and his crusade was virtually accomplished. But it served his purpose to continue to wear

the mask a little longer. Still assuming a desire for peace, he recommended the Vaudois to again petition the Duke, who had now returned to the plains of Piedmont ; at the same time strongly urging on them to make success certain, by raising a sum of 20,000 crowns. If this sum were presented to the Duke, he could promise them immediate peace, and liberty to practise their religion as they liked. Thus one concession after another was made by the men of the valleys, until at last, La Trinita thought he had them entirely in his power.

While the deputies were absent, and when the Vaudois thought themselves secure, at least till the Duke's answer was received, the soldiers of the Papal leader were suddenly let loose on them. A fearful massacre followed. Surprised, and defenceless, most of the inhabitants of those valleys entered by the soldiers were cut down in cold blood. A few escaped to the woods and caves. A touching instance is told of a helpless old man, who had lived a hundred and three years. He was placed in a cave, under the care of a grand-daughter, a young girl of seventeen summers. His hiding place, alas, was discovered ; the poor old man murdered ; and the horrible perpetrators of this deed, offering outrage to the girl, she fled wildly from their

brutal pursuit, leaped over a precipice, and died.

But a just retribution was to overtake La Trinita for his dark treachery. The Waldenses were now awake to the real state of affairs. They saw plainly that they had been deceived. Their petition, after a contemptuous silence of six weeks, was coldly denied, and more uncompromising conditions than ever were imposed. The fearless spirit of the Vaudois was now fully aroused. They shook off depression, and prepared, with the help of the God of battles, to stand to their arms for the protection of their hearths and homes. As one man, all the inhabitants of Piedmont rose up against the cruel invader ; and La Trinita, after losing the greater part of his troops, was glad to effect his escape from the valleys.

The war was now fairly started. The Papal leader, having received large reinforcements, advanced boldly on Angrogna, never doubting that the Vaudois would be overwhelmed by the prospect of such an array. But he was miserably mistaken. Attack as he might, with few or more, not a foot could be gained within those fastnesses. The Vaudois fought with an earnestness born of just indignation and a sense of the righteousness of their cause. Space fails to tell of the humiliating defeats inflicted on this proud persecutor. Thrice he attempted

to enter Angrogna, and thrice he was repulsed with heavy loss. He attacked the valleys, also, at three different points, at all three of which he was repelled. Once, by stratagem, he nearly succeeded in gaining an entrance into the famous natural citadel of Pra del Tor, but with an almost miraculous courage, the post was held by six youths against a numerous troop until help arrived.

Finally, in the last campaign, the greater part of his force, caught and hemmed in between high rocks, was completely annihilated, and La Trinita himself escaped with the utmost difficulty.

Fifteen months this cruel war continued. By far the greater loss was on the side of the Duke; and he was glad, on the 5th of June, 1561, to open negotiations with his subjects, and finally to sign a treaty of peace. The conditions of this peace permitted the Vaudois to build churches, and to worship in them according to their own mind. A time of peace and repose followed, of which the Churches were sadly in need. But how many, alas! had been cut off when, after the din of war ceased, they met once more in their quiet valleys, to speak of all that they had suffered, and of all, too, that they had gained.



CHAPTER X.

THE GREAT MASSACRE OF 1655.

NEARLY a century separates the persecution recorded in our last, from the greatest tragedy of Waldensian history—the Massacre of 1655. We can only bestow a passing glance at the more prominent events which fill up this interval.

The war which ended so ingloriously for La Trinita, had not for that reason proved the less disastrous for the Vaudois. No sooner had the invader retired, than the bitter effects of his invasion began to be experienced. The harvests of the Vaudois were ruined; their vineyards and fruit trees destroyed; their hamlets and villages levelled with the ground; desolation was everywhere, and now famine threatened to succeed to persecution and war. Nor was this all. A host of persecuted refugees

from Calabria suddenly sought an asylum in the Valleys ; and, impoverished as the Vaudois were, they did not hesitate to receive them. Many had now perished, but that the tale of suffering reached to other countries, and kind and generous hearts freely gave of their substance to relieve the much enduring people of the Valleys.

But by-and-bye seed-time and harvest returned, and peace and plenty was restored ; churches, and little chalêts dotted again the mountain side ; the sweet sounds of praise, mingling with the solemn voice of prayer, awoke once more the silence of those mountain solitudes. God seemed to have placed, as it were, a protecting hand over His little flock ; granting to them a brief breathing space, wherein they might be encouraged and strengthened for the coming conflict. This unusual quiet was the more remarkable, inasmuch as the Protestants in the surrounding countries were passing through a time of severe trial ; the Papacy waging a deadly warfare against all who confessed the Reformed faith.

The Vaudois, however, were not without their sorrows, though these were of another kind. During this respite from persecution, it pleased God to test them in a different way. We are told that “ on the morning of the 23rd

of August, 1629, a cloud of unusual blackness gathered on the summit of the Col Julien. It burst in a waterspout or deluge. The torrent rolled down the mountains on both sides, and several villages were overthrown by the sudden inundation. Many of the houses were swept away, and the inhabitants had barely time to save their lives by flight. In September of the same year, there came an icy wind, accompanied by a dry cloud, which scathed their valleys, and destroyed the crop of the chestnut tree. Then followed a second deluge of rain which completely ruined the vintage." These calamities the Vaudois received as the chastening hand of God; and their pastors solemnly assembled together to humble themselves, and supplicate in prayer to God.

But a still heavier calamity was about to burst upon them, spreading a deep gloom, and carrying mourning into every dwelling in the Valleys. In the following year (1630), a terrible plague broke out, which, passing rapidly from valley to valley, swept away great numbers of the inhabitants. Nothing could stay this awful scourge; despite the heroic efforts of the Waldensian pastors, it ravaged every village and hamlet in the valleys, finally carrying off twelve of the fifteen of these devoted men, who thus sacrificed their lives for their flocks. Everywhere were these true shepherds present;

visiting the sick, consoling the dying, and preaching to the terrified crowds, who hung upon their lips; not knowing but that they might be the next victims of the plague. All through the summer this malady raged. "Horsemen would be seen," says one writer, "to drop from the saddle on the highway, seized with sudden illness. Soldiers and sutlers, struck down in by-paths, lay there infecting the air with their corpses. Towns and villages which had rung so recently with the sound of industry were now silent. Parents were without children, and children without parents." Not less than 10,000, or from a half to two-thirds of the entire population of the Valleys, were thus swept away during this awful visitation. There was not a house into which death had not entered; and long and loud was the voice of lamentation heard after the destroyer had departed.

Fifteen years pass away, and we are brought to the eve of the greatest woe which had yet befallen the Waldenses. It is the year 1650. The clouds once more begin to gather, and are seen travelling over in the direction of the Valleys. The throne of Savoy is filled at this time with a mild and humane prince, but, alas, he is counselled by one of the most faithful adherents of the Papacy, and consequently a bitter and cruel enemy to the "heretics." In short, a fresh persecution is about to commence

—a persecution which this time, alas, will not cease till its bloody and relentless purpose shall have been entirely fulfilled. The blow did not fall at once. A series of smaller attacks were made before the great and final stroke descended.

We need not follow all the events that led up to the final catastrophe—the Massacre of 1655. Suffice it to say that the expedition now directed against the Waldenses, was commanded by a cruel, cunning, and bigoted Catholic named Pianeza, who had secret and positive instructions to pluck out root, and branch, the heresy so long existing in the mountains. Nothing short of utter extermination was the deliberate purpose of Pianeza, and his wretched followers; and we have now to see how faithfully, and fearfully this was accomplished.

Past experience of Vaudois valour had taught the Papal arms that it was worse than useless to attempt to enter the Valleys by force. Success when before obtained, had always been the result of treachery and deceit; **and Pianeza was not slow to adopt the same means.** Appearing suddenly before the Valleys with only a small force, he gave the deputies sent out by the Waldenses to understand that he was in pursuit of **some** fugitives, who had recently deserted from the **Duke's** army. He only intended passing through their terri-



tory; but at the same time wished that his soldiers might be quartered for a few days in the several valleys of Piedmont. The Vaudois, having no suspicion of treachery, not only permitted Pianeza to enter their valleys, but actually opened the doors of their dwellings to his soldiers. Once in the heart of the Waldensian territory, it was easy for the Papal leader to dispose his troops so as the most effectually to carry out his atrocious design. Now, indeed, was this poor people undone. Their murderers were in their homes, and they knew it not. The soldiers eat, slept and conversed with their intended victims, who had not a suspicion of the horrors awaiting them.

At last, when all was ready, the blow fell, and with the sudden crash of a thunderbolt. It was at four o'clock on the morning of the 24th of April, 1655, that the signal was given from the castle hill of La Torre. The peace and quiet which a moment before had reigned throughout the Valleys, was suddenly broken by the shrieks and cries of a thousand victims being butchered and tortured in cold blood. No words could adequately describe the awful horrors of this massacre. Utterly defenceless, the poor Waldenses were entirely at the mercy of their destroyers, who took a brutal delight in inflicting every kind of excruciating torture on their victims.

An extract or two from the pen of Leger, the native historian, and an eye witness of these horrible scenes, will best convey an idea of their enormity. "We see," he says, "the victims climbing the hills with what speed they are able, the murderer on their track. We see the torrents as they roll down from the heights, beginning to be tinged with blood. Gleams of lurid light burst out through the dark smoke that is rolling through the vales, for a priest and monk accompany each party of soldiers, to set fire to the houses, as soon as the inmates have been dispatched. Alas! what sounds are those that fall upon our ears! The cries and groans of the dying are echoed and re-echoed from the rocks around, and it seems as if the mountains had taken up a wailing for the slaughter of their children."

"Little children," he continues, "were torn from the arms of their mothers, clasped by their tiny feet, and their heads dashed against the rocks; or were held between two soldiers, and their quivering limbs torn up by main force. Their mangled bodies were then thrown on the highways to be devoured by beasts. The sick and the aged were burned alive in their dwellings. Some had their hands and arms and legs chopped off, and fire applied to the several parts to staunch the bleeding and prolong their suffering. Some were fastened down into the

furrows of their own fields, and ploughed into the soil, as men plough manure into it. Others were burned alive. Fathers were marched to death with the heads of their sons suspended round their necks. Parents were compelled to look on, while their children were massacred, before being themselves permitted to die." No wonder that after such a recital, Leger exclaims, "My hand trembles, so that I can scarce hold the pen, and my tears mingle in torrents with my ink, while I write the deeds of these children of darkness—blacker even than the Prince of Darkness himself."

Never, indeed, had there been such an unjustifiable wickedness perpetrated as this massacre. Uncontrollable was the grief of the survivors as they looked upon their brethren slain, and their country devastated. What was to be done? Many seriously thought of abandoning the Valleys, never to return; but the brave Leger encouraged their drooping spirits, and besought them to remain in their ancient inheritance, for God would surely never forsake them. Further to encourage them, he promised to address an appeal to their Protestant brethren in other countries, feeling sure that help would be willingly given in their dire distress. Most pitiful is this lamentation—this bitter cry of the poor remnant of the slaughtered

Vaudois Church. "Our tears are no longer of water," write they, "they are of blood; they do not merely obscure our sight, they choke our very hearts. Our hands tremble, and our heads ache by the many blows we have received. We cannot frame an epistle answerable to the intent of our minds, and the strangeness of our desolations. We pray you to excuse us, and to collect amid our groans the meaning of what we fain would utter."

Nowhere did these tidings awaken a deeper sympathy than in England, and nowhere was indignation so great against the perpetrators. A letter was addressed by Cromwell to the Duke of Savoy, expressing his unmitigated horror of the awful deeds that had been committed. He further despatched to Turin, an ambassador, who visited the Valleys on his way, and saw with his own eyes the frightful effects of the massacre.

But sympathy with the poor afflicted Vaudois was shown in a practical way, and a large sum of money was conveyed to the Valleys to alleviate the distress. Yet none but God could heal their broken hearts; their grief was too great for man. To God they turned and poured forth their lament in the words of the 79th Psalm, which so literally set forth their condition :—

“ O God, the heathen are come unto thine inheritance,
Thy holy temple have they defiled ;
They have laid Jerusalem in heaps.
The dead bodies of Thy servants have they given
To be meat unto the fowls of heaven ;
The flesh of thy saints unto the beasts of the earth.
Their blood have they shed like water
And there was none to bury them.”





CHAPTER XI.

THEIR EXILE, AND HAPPY RETURN TO THE VALLEYS.

WE have seen wave after wave of persecution break with desolating force over the valleys of the Vaudois. Each succeeding shock has seemed only more calamitous than the last. One, more terrible than all, has yet to be noticed, which swept this devoted people from their beloved valleys, and forced them to find an asylum in a foreign land. But as the darkest moment of the night is that which just precedes the dawn, so the darkest moment of Waldensian history is that which almost heralds in the glorious dawn of their deliverance. We must briefly notice the events which led up to this last and greatest sorrow of the Vaudois.

Hardly had Protestant Europe recovered

from the shock occasioned by the tidings of the last great massacre of the Vaudois, before it was again startled by rumours that the same cruelties were again to be enacted. This time, however, the tempest approached from another quarter—the north of the Alps: from Louis XIV. of France, the Grand Monarch, as the age obsequiously styled him.

It was the year 1685. The grand Monarch, all great and powerful as he was, could not stave off one moment the hour of his death, which he knew was fast approaching. A good Catholic was Louis XIV. as well as a magnificent monarch; and now in view of the grave and its hereafter, he inquired of his confessor how best he might atone for past sins, and at the same time confer a large and lasting blessing on the Holy Catholic Church. The answer was ready. No grander, no better, and no more pious work could he discharge than the utter extirpation of Protestantism from France. And this he determined to do.

But the thoughtful advisers of Louis saw no reason why this *good* work should not be extended beyond the limits of France, even to the province of Piedmont; so that while the Huguenots were being dealt with in France the Waldenses might not be neglected in the Alps. Accordingly, the French king addressed a letter to the Duke of Savoy, requesting that

he would purge the Valleys of the heretics, as he intended doing in France; adding, that if troops were needed, he would provide an army of 14,000 men. The young duke Victor Amadeus, was at this moment on more than usually good terms with his subjects, and was in no humour to unsheathe his sword against them, especially at the dictate of a foreign prince, so he deigned no reply. The request was repeated, accompanied by a hint from the potent Louis that if he did not care for the business, he would do it for him, and keep the Valleys for his pains. This was sufficient. A treaty was entered into by which the French king promised an armed force to enable the Duke to compel the Vaudois to return to the Romish faith, or to exterminate them.

No sooner was this treaty concluded than an edict was sent throughout the Valleys which enforced conditions alike cruel, unreasonable, and unrighteous. The terms of this edict were at once an open violation of liberties long held sacred by the Vaudois. Their rights as peaceful, law-abiding subjects were ignored; and solemn treaties made in the past, and lately ratified, were disregarded. Under the penalty of war, confiscation of their lands, banishment, exile, and even death, the Waldenses were to abandon their faith, dismiss their pastors, attend mass, permit their children to be

sent to monasteries and convents, and, in short, to yield everything that they held more precious than their lives.

Once more consternation filled the valleys. Never had the immediate future looked so dark; for now it was not only the revenge of the Duke they had to fear, but the wrath and power of the French king.

To tell of all that followed would be but to repeat what, in the course of this history, we have so frequently described. Suffice it, then, that in spite of a solemn remonstrance from his subjects the Duke of Savoy united his troops with those of the King of France, and in a brief interval an army of 20,000 disciplined soldiers were seen advancing towards the mountains. Prodiges of valour were performed by the Vaudois in repelling this great host; and at many points they were amazingly successful. But where arms failed, treachery served as well, and, alas, but too well. For some reason never satisfactorily explained, the Vaudois suddenly laid down their arms at discretion. Instead, however, of the Duke granting an honourable peace, a general massacre ensued. Again the rocks echoed with the shout of the assassin, and the cry of his victim. Every horror that had marked the great massacre of 1655 was repeated, and even surpassed.

But the Valleys were to be *purged*, the pest

of heresy *rooted out*. How was this to be effected ? Thousands of the heretics had been slain, but still thousands remained ; and the assassins were wearying of the slaughter. Sorrow upon sorrow, woe upon woe, had been long the lot of this afflicted people. Yet another more crushing, more heart-breaking than all was still to befall them. A decree from the Duke arrived, ordering all the remaining inhabitants to be transported as prisoners from the Valleys, and immured in the various fortresses and dungeons of Turin. And this was done. From 12,000 to 15,000 men, women, and children were hurried away from their native Valleys, few ever to return. Treated with the greatest hardships, deprived of all but subsistence, thrust into noisome damp cells, without light, without air, a short year was sufficient to reduce this number to a miserable remnant of 3,000. " When they entered these dungeons," says Henri Arnaud, " they counted, 14,000 healthy mountaineers, but when, at the intercession of the Swiss deputies, their prisons were opened, 3,000 skeletons only crawled out."

And were these poor sufferers permitted to return again to their Valleys in peace ? Alas, no. They were released from prison only to be driven into hopeless exile. And how, and when ? Across the snowy ice-bound passes of the Alps, and in the depth of winter, when the

snow is piled to a fearful depth, and daily tempests threaten with certain death the too adventurous traveller. With hearts as cold as the frozen elements around, their wretched persecutors compelled the miserable remnant of the Vaudois to undertake this perilous journey into Switzerland, knowing full well that it must prove fatal to nearly all. We will not depict the horrors of the frightful passage. Overtaken by storms, or rendered helpless with the intense cold, numbers fell never to rise again.

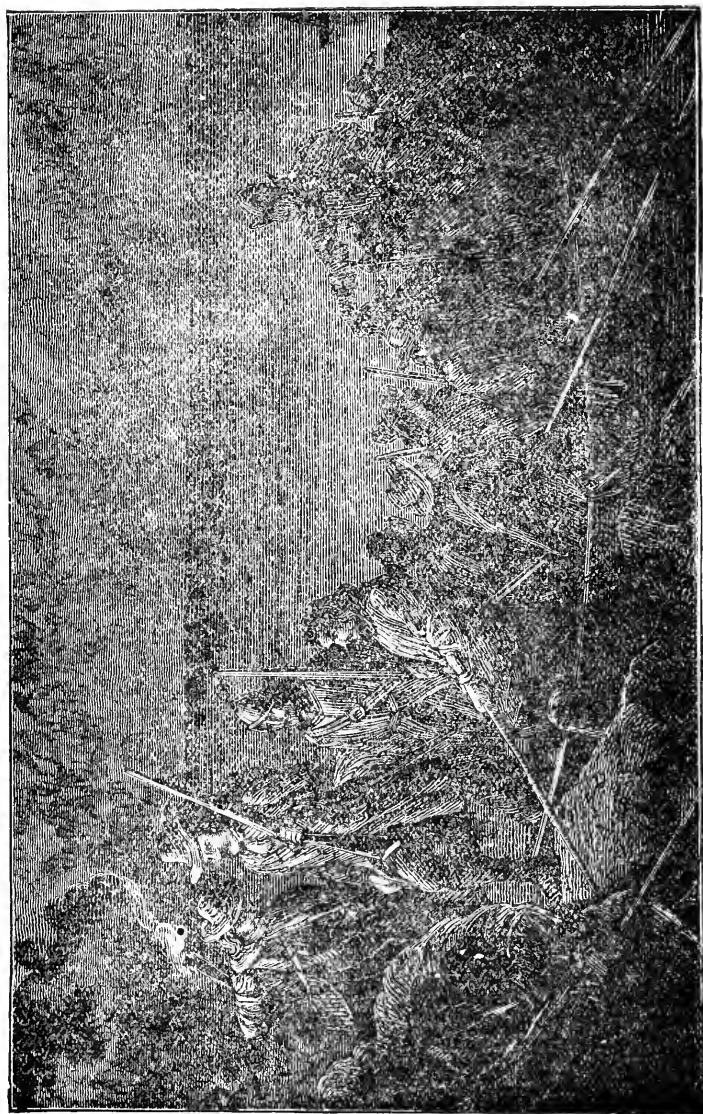
After three weeks of unspeakable suffering, the first band reached Geneva; but it was not until February, 1687, that the last survivors, weak, emaciated, and wayworn, entered the hospitable streets of the great Protestant city. Here did those poor pilgrims find an asylum, indeed! Welcomed, clothed, and befriended by their Genevan brethren, never, in their after days of prosperity, did the Vaudois forget the hand stretched forth to help in their greatest hour of need.

Three years pass away, during which the poor exiles, nestled, as it were, in the bosom of the Genevan Church, rest in peace. But keenly they felt they *were exiles*, and many a longing look did they cast towards the mountains, behind which lay their much-loved native Valleys. An unspeakable yearning seized

them to return, and every day this desire grew stronger. Associated with this longing was the conviction that it was their duty to return and establish again the ark of testimony, violated and overthrown by the enemies of God's truth. At length the desire grew into a fixed resolve to return; and, although it seemed but a forlorn hope, and insuperable difficulties lay before them, the Vaudois, leaving the issue with God, now actually made the perilous attempt.

The story of this strange expedition, so daringly conceived, and so successfully carried through, is perhaps without a parallel in history; so successful, indeed, that there remains no doubt the same hand which led Israel of old into their rest, also led this poor feeble remnant of the Vaudois into theirs.

It was on the evening of the 16th of August, 1689, that, all preparations having been secretly completed, the returning exiles, numbering 800 souls in all, started on their perilous journey. As on many a previous crisis, a distinguished man arose to lead them. Brave, intelligent, and with great decision of character, Henri Arnaud was just the man to head this forlorn hope. A pastor, too, he was of decided piety; his confidence in God going hand in hand with his ardent patriotism and devotion to the people.

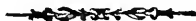


Crossing Lake Lemman by night, this little band arrived on the southern shore, and began a long and dangerous march through a country covered with foes. Before them rose the great snow-clad mountains over which they had to pass. But the sight only made their hearts beat higher, and their steps hasten he faster; for behind those snowy peaks lay the goal of all their hopes. The strange adventures, the hair-breadth escapes, the privations, the alternating feelings of hope and suspense, the courage, daring, and endurance, and finally the complete success that crowned this famous enterprise, have all been faithfully recorded in a work written by Henri Arnaud himself, called "*La Rentree Glorieuse*," or "*The glorious return of the Vaudois to their Valleys*," to which, space compels us reluctantly to refer the reader.

With the establishment of the Waldenses once more in their native Valleys, begins the bright side of their history. Persecutions after this, though not altogether unknown, were of a more moderate character. Their Valleys became quickly repeopled; their villages rose again from the dust; and sounds of toil and industry awoke once more the quiet vales. Their vineyards thrived; their harvests were blessed: so peace and contentment reigned. Churches and schools were rebuilt. The voice of praise

and prayer again resounded through the vales. "Weeping" says the Psalmist, "may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Now had come the morning of joy for this long suffering people.

The subsequent history of the Waldenses may be told in a few words. From the period at which our story closes, the Vaudois Church has continued in the Valleys of Piedmont, never yielding either to the threats or promises of Rome, but abiding by, and ever clinging to that pure faith which their forefathers died in maintaining, and to which they still set a value more precious than their lives.



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